Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2026-27 Reply Serial No.

TLB012

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3187)

Head: (42) Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (2) Mechanical Installations Safety

Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (POON Kwok-ying)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

The Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2026-27 under Programme (2) in the Controlling Officer's Report of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) include monitoring the safety performance of railway service provided by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL). In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of:

(a) the number of service disruption incidents on various railway lines of the MTRCL in the past 3 years and, for each incident, the date and time, the affected sections, the causes, the duration between detection of the incident and completion of the recovery work, the longest headway during the period of limited service (if applicable), the estimated number of passengers affected, and the amounts required to be set aside under the Service Performance Rebate (set out in table format);

(b) the number of escalator and lift failures at each MTR station in the past 3 years and, for each failure, the date and time, the causes, whether there were any persons injured, and the duration for which the service of the lifts/escalators concerned was suspended;

(c) the number of escalator and lift replacement projects conducted by the MTRCL in the past 3 years and planned for 2026 as scheduled, and for each project, the location, the commencement date and the completion date;

(d) the staffing establishment, the salaries, and the operating and equipment expenses involved in monitoring the MTRCL's safety by the Railways Branch of the EMSD in 2024-25 and the estimated figures for 2026-27; and how the EMSD ensures that the monitoring work of the MTRCL's safety will not be affected, given that the estimated provision for this programme in 2026-27 will be drastically reduced by 37% to $647 million, compared to the revised estimate for 2025-26;

(e) the respective numbers of inspections conducted at the MTRCL and issues identified by the EMSD in 2025; and the follow-up measures taken by the EMSD in respect of the issues identified during the inspections; and

(f) whether the EMSD has kept records of the MTRCL's maintenance expenditure, and the respective numbers of maintenance staff employed by the MTRCL on a long-term basis, contract basis, outsourced basis, and substitute basis in the past 3 years; and how the EMSD ensures the professionalism of outsourced and substitute workers to prevent varying quality of maintenance that indirectly increases the likelihood of incidents?

Asked by: Hon LAM Wai-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

(a) In 2025, the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) operated more than 1.85 million train trips on its heavy rail network, making an average of over 4.7 million passenger trips every day. The level of both train service delivery and passenger journeys on-time was maintained at a high standard of 99.9%. The number of incidents resulting in service disruption due to factors under the MTRCL's control, the causes and the amounts set aside by the MTRCL under the enhanced Service Performance Rebate arrangement in the past 3 years are set out in **Annex 1**. As for the number of passengers affected by each of the service disruption incidents, the MTRCL does not keep the relevant statistical data.

(b) The details of lift and escalator incidents reported by the MTRCL to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) in accordance with the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (LEO) in the past 3 years are set out in the following table:

Equipment	Date	Location	Cause of failure	Number of persons injured
Escalator	7 June 2023	Kowloon Tong Station	Emergency stop of an escalator due to poor contact in the control circuit, resulting in passenger injuries	1
	15 October 2023	Yau Ma Tei Station	Emergency stop of an escalator due to poor contact in the control circuit, resulting in passenger injuries	1
	4 May 2024	Tuen Mun Station	Smouldering of a component in the escalator's braking device due to poor adjustment of such device	0
	22 February 2025	HKU Station	Steel wires protruding from the surface of an escalator handrail, scratching a	1

			passenger's right hand while holding the handrail	
	29 July 2025	Fanling Station	Unsynchronised handrail and steps of an escalator due to insufficient tension in its handrail belt, resulting in passenger injuries	1
Lift	28 September 2025	Jordan Station	Passenger entrapment in a lift due to malfunction of an electrical component	0

Note: Under the LEO, responsible persons for lifts or escalators are required to report incidents involving major component failures of lifts or escalators to the EMSD. As for other minor components failures, such as those arising from improper use by passengers or by external objects, the registered contractors will record the incidents in their log-book and need not report them to the EMSD.

The duration for which the service of a lift or escalator is suspended due to a failure is not a required item for submission under the LEO, and thus the EMSD does not maintain such information.

(c) According to the information provided by the MTRCL, replacement projects for 26 escalators and 34 lifts across 32 stations on the Tsuen Wan Line, Kwun Tong Line, Island Line, and the Airport Express / Tung Chung Line were conducted between 2023 and 2025. The replacement project for each escalator or lift generally takes 6 to 8 months. As at the end of 2025, about 90% of these replacement projects were completed. The MTRCL plans to further replace 8 escalators and 3 lifts across 5 stations on the Kwun Tong Line, Tseung Kwan O Line, Tuen Ma Line, and Disneyland Resort Line in 2026.

(d) In Programme (2) – Mechanical Installations Safety, the provisions for 2026-27 is around $380 million (about 37%) lower than the revised estimate for 2025-26. This is mainly due to the decreased cash flow requirement of around $380 million for the Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme following the completion of granting approval for the majority of applicants by 2025-26.

The Railways Branch (RB) of the EMSD, in accordance with relevant ordinances on railway safety, is responsible for regulating and monitoring the safe operation of railway systems, including those operated by the MTRCL, the Automated People Mover at the Hong Kong International Airport operated by the Airport Authority Hong Kong, the tramway system operated by the Hong Kong Tramways Limited and the peak tramway system operated by the Peak Tramways Company Limited. The establishment of the RB of the EMSD in 2024-25 and 2025-26, and its estimated staffing establishment in 2026-27 are set out below:

Rank	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27 (Estimate)
Assistant Director	1	1	1
Chief Engineer	4*	4*	4*
Senior Engineer	15	15	15
Engineer	28	28	28
Inspector	4	4	4

* 2 Chief Engineer posts, which are time-limited directorate posts created in July 2021, were granted approval in 2025 for an extension of 5 years until 2030.

The total expenditure of the RB of the EMSD in 2024-25, and its estimated total expenditures in 2025-26 and 2026-27 are set out in the following table:

	2024-25	2025-26 (Estimate)	2026-27 (Estimate)
Salaries	75.5	71.4	71.4
Other operating expenses	16.3	16.3	12.5
Expenditure ($ million)	91.8	87.7^	83.9*

^ The decrease in the estimated total expenditure in 2025-26 was mainly due to a reduction in salary expenses for staff on pre-retirement leave.

* The decrease in the estimated total expenditure in 2026-27 is mainly due to a reduction in the required provision for operating expenses.

The RB of the EMSD will continue to utilise existing resources to review the major railway systems of the MTRCL's operating lines on an on-going basis, and apply innovative technologies to enhance its capabilities in monitoring the railway services and asset maintenance performance, thereby ensuring railway safety.

(e) In 2025, the EMSD conducted 499 inspections of railway facilities/systems, including 463 inspections of the MTRCL. The EMSD always adopts a "risk-based" approach to inspections, which involve inspecting, checking and assessing areas that may pose a higher risk to the safe operation of the railway based on past records. These include regular inspections, surprise checks and incident investigations. The EMSD will also conduct the "comprehensive and direct assessment" exercises, which involve taking the initiative to audit the assets and safety management systems of MTRCL's operating railway lines, with a view to identifying potential problems at an early stage. The EMSD made 86 improvement recommendations on 52 items that required follow-up actions to the MTRCL during the "comprehensive and direct assessment" exercises in 2025.

If any problems or areas for improvement are identified during inspections and audits, the EMSD will immediately request the MTRCL to follow up and make improvement recommendations, and will monitor the progress of the MTRCL in implementing the improvement recommendations through regular meetings and on-site inspections.

(f) The MTRCL has all along adopted a maintenance regime that meets international standards, and made its human resources arrangements based on maintenance needs.

Currently, the MTRCL's outsourced work primarily involves processes that are relatively repetitive and less technically demanding. Additionally, the MTRCL will arrange for qualified outsourced personnel possessing the necessary licences or registration to perform relevant work in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements. These workers from contractors are required to undergo specific maintenance procedures and standard training provided by the MTRCL, and shall follow the same procedures and guidelines as MTRCL staff when carrying out maintenance work. Besides, MTRCL internal staff shall take charge of supervising the contractors to ensure that the maintenance work performed by outsourced workers and term workers complies with the safety and quality standards set by the MTRCL. The EMSD is responsible for regulating the safety of railway operations. Regardless of whether the railway systems and equipment are maintained by the MTRCL or its outsourced contractors, the EMSD will monitor them based on the same standards.

According to the information provided by the MTRCL, the establishment of maintenance staff for the MTRCL's heavy rail and light rail systems in the past 3 years (as at 31 December of each year) was 5 839 (2023), 6 261 (2024) and 6 356 (2025) respectively.

The MTRCL will also temporarily fill staff vacancies through various arrangements, including arranging term workers to assist in maintenance work under the supervision of MTRCL staff. The actual numbers of term workers engaged in the past 3 years (as at 31 December of each year) were 432 (2023), 424 (2024) and 433 (2025) respectively.

The MTRCL has not provided a breakdown of its maintenance expenditure.

Annex 1

Numbers of Incidents Resulting in Service Disruption of 8 Minutes or Above due to Factors under the MTRCL's Control

Kwun Tong Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	17	17	0	15	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
2024	12	11	1	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2025	4	3	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Tsuen Wan Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	8	8	0	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2024	10	10	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2025	11	11	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Island Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	5	5	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2024	10	8	2	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2025	5	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Tseung Kwan O Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	6	6	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
2024	12	10	2	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	10	10	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	19.2

South Island Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	4	4	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

East Rail Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	13	13	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	11	11	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	12	11	1	9	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2

Tuen Ma Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	18	18	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	6	6	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2025	10	10	0	7	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3

Tung Chung Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	10	8	2	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2024	11	10	1	9	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1.2
2025	6	6	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2

Disneyland Resort Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Airport Express

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	5	4	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	7	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	9	7	2	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Light Rail

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2023	18	14	4	13	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	17
2024	10	9	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	11	8	3	8	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note 1： According to the existing railway incident reporting mechanism, the MTRCL is required to notify the Transport Department (TD) within 8 minutes of any railway incident which has caused train service disruption of 8 minutes or is expected to cause disruption of 8 minutes or more. For service disruption of less than 8 minutes, the impact on passengers is comparatively minimal and the MTRCL is not required to notify the TD. Hence, the TD does not have the number of incidents with service disruption of less than 8 minutes.

Note 2： Equipment failure includes station equipment failure, infrastructure failure, rolling stock failure, etc.

Note 3： After the review of 2023 Fare Adjustment Mechanism, there is an increase in the amount to be set aside for incidents that cause disruptions of more than 3 hours and the maximum amount to be set aside per incident, as well as an introduction of a peak hour multiplier under the Service Performance Rebate.

- End -