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

TLB013

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1492)

Head: (42) Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

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:

In recent years, the railway systems in Hong Kong have experienced frequent failures, including signalling faults, equipment damage and power issues; any reduction in inspections may exacerbate existing hazards. However, as set out under Indicators, the estimated number of inspections for railway facilities/systems in 2026 is 485, representing a decrease of 14 compared to 499 in 2025. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

a) What was the distribution of the MTR lines or stations inspected in 2025? Will it be the same in 2026? If no, what are the details?

b) In how many of the 499 inspections in 2025 were actual problems identified? What were the major problems and how were they followed up?

c) Will the reduction in the number of inspections in 2026 increase the risks arising from the above problems, such as escalating into more serious incidents, or causing derailments or collisions during peak hours, thereby threatening passenger safety? If yes, are there any remedial or preventive measures in place? If no, what are the reasons?

d) Regarding the 4 requests proposed by the Chief Executive last year to prevent incidents in the MTR system, how has the Department strengthened collaboration with or assistance to the MTR Corporation Limited in enhancing overall safety standards and risk monitoring and assessment capabilities? What are the details?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ming-sum, Michelle (LegCo internal reference no.: 35)

Reply:

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%. In 2025, there were 83 incidents of service disruption of 8 minutes or above due to factors under the MTRCL's control, a figure lower than that in 2024

(89 incidents). Nevertheless, the Government attaches great importance to every incident and will require the MTRCL to conduct thorough investigations to identify the causes, and to implement improvement measures to prevent occurrence of similar incidents, thereby ensuring safe and reliable railway operation. Our reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

a) and b) The Railways Branch of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (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. In 2025, the EMSD conducted 499 inspections of railway facilities/systems, including 463 inspections of the MTRCL covering trains, power supply system, permanent way, signalling system, station facilities and maintenance depot on various railway lines, and the new railway projects. The number of inspections is tabulated by railway line below. The EMSD will schedule inspections based on the latest risk assessment results, and adjust inspection routes and facilities to be inspected in a timely manner.

Railway line	**Island Line**	**Kwun Tong Line**	**Tsuen Wan Line**	**Tseung Kwan O Line**	**East Rail Line**	**Tuen Ma Line**	**Airport Express Line/ Tung Chung Line/ Disneyland Resort Line**	**Light Rail Line**	**South Island Line**	**High Speed Rail Line**	**New railway project**
Number of inspections	32	39	78	34	58	39	43	26	24	53	37

In 2025, the problems identified by the EMSD during inspections and audits involved equipment failure, human error and a lack of proper maintenance procedures. Among these, during the "comprehensive and direct assessment" exercises, a total of 52 items that required follow-up actions were identified across MTRCL's operating lines, 6 of which required immediate follow-up, mainly involving the maintenance of electrical systems and overhead lines. The EMSD immediately required the MTRCL to take follow-up action and proposed 11 improvement recommendations. Currently, these 6 items have been properly addressed to ensure railway safety, and the relevant improvement recommendations are being gradually implemented.

c) The number of inspections for railway facilities/systems in 2025 (499 inspections) was relatively higher than that in the previous 2 years (478 and 455 inspections in 2023 and 2024 respectively). This was due to additional inspections required following 3 major railway incidents that occurred in February, April and May 2025. If these additional inspections are excluded, the estimated number of inspections for 2026 (485 inspections) will be generally comparable to that in 2025. Should an increase in the risks associated with systems and equipment on individual lines be detected, the EMSD will timely adjust the inspection strategy, including increasing

the frequency of inspections on relevant lines, expanding the scope of checks, and conducting more in-depth reviews of specific facilities, for early identification of potential problems and immediate follow-up to prevent incidents.

d) As the statutory regulatory authority on railway safety, the EMSD has been closely monitoring the safety of MTRCL's railway systems and has urged the MTRCL to address potential issues before they arise by improving the safety standards of its railway systems. At the Government's request, the MTRCL formulated a follow-up plan on incident prevention and handling in June 2025. The plan covers an immediate one-off targeted and special inspection of critical assets and a series of mid- to long-term measures. They include strengthening the monitoring and risk management of railway assets to enhance the overall resilience of the railway network; formulating contingency plans for extreme scenarios, and reinforcing drills and training with different scenarios to strengthen the decision-making and execution capabilities of MTR staff during incidents; and enhancing arrangements for free shuttle bus services during incidents, strengthening information dissemination, such as updates on incident recovery progress and suggestions on alternative routes, to facilitate the public in journey planning according to the latest situation, and rallying community support for affected passengers. The Government has kept a close eye on the progress, implementation and effectiveness of various follow-up actions taken by the MTRCL.

Regarding short-term measures, the MTRCL has completed the one-off special inspection of critical assets, including overhead lines and signalling points, and rectified the issues identified. To enhance readiness to manage incidents of scale, the MTRCL has established a drill management system to standardise the procedures for formulating drill plans and the mechanisms for post-drill assessment. The first mega joint community drill was successfully held on the Tseung Kwan O Line in December 2025. During the drill, the EMSD incorporated scenarios involving equipment failure to strengthen emergency response training of frontline staff, and provided improvement recommendations on the spot. Such drills will be held regularly to continuously enhance the MTRCL's emergency response capabilities. As for the application of innovation and technology (I&T), the MTRCL has deployed technologies on some of the railway lines to monitor in real time the health conditions of systems, including trains, overhead lines, permanent way and signalling points. The EMSD is actively supervising and guiding the MTRCL to accelerate the application of I&T to achieve data-driven asset management and strengthen risk prediction and mitigation.

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