

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0032)

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 2024-25, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department will continue to promote and administer the voluntary registration schemes for vehicle mechanics and vehicle maintenance workshops (VRSs) through stepping up inspection of both vehicle mechanics and vehicle maintenance workshops under the VRSs; include the maintenance of electric vehicles (EVs) into the VRSs to accommodate the rising demand from the popularisation of EVs in Hong Kong; as well as examine the feasibility and formulate proposals on introducing a mandatory registration scheme for vehicle mechanics and vehicle maintenance workshops taking into account developments in the vehicle market. In this regard, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the current numbers of EV maintenance workshops and EV mechanics in Hong Kong;
2. the safety and equipment requirements for EV maintenance workshops, as well as the technical and professional qualifications required of EV mechanics;
3. the measures in place to ensure that such maintenance workshops meet the relevant requirements and that such mechanics possess the required technical and professional qualifications; and
4. whether the Government has set goals, targets and timetable, and prepared a breakdown of the estimated expenditures for the relevant work; if yes, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

The Government published the Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles and the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 in 2021, setting out a clear target of ceasing new registration of fuel-propelled and hybrid private cars by 2035. Relevant policies and the development of electric vehicles (EVs) will impact on the vehicle maintenance industry. In view of this, after making reference to the practices of other jurisdictions and consulting the Vehicle Maintenance Technical Advisory Committee (VMTAC), the Government plans to add the service scope for EV maintenance to the existing Voluntary Registration Scheme for Vehicle Mechanics and Voluntary Registration Scheme for Vehicle Maintenance Workshops (the VRSs), so as to enable the vehicle maintenance industry to keep abreast of

the times and meet the local demand for EV maintenance services. It is expected that the relevant measures will be officially implemented in mid-2024.

1. At present, most EVs are still under after-sale warranty, and their maintenance services are mainly provided by the agents of respective brands of EV. As the local EV maintenance market is still at the initial stage, the Government currently does not have statistics on the numbers of vehicle maintenance workshops and vehicle mechanics providing EV maintenance services. The Government will grasp more relevant data with the introduction of the new service scope for EV maintenance.
2. In response to the newly added EV maintenance service scope, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) and the VMTAC have jointly developed the Practice Guidelines for Electric Vehicle Maintenance for the trade after making reference to relevant international standards. The guidelines provide a list of recommended facilities for EV maintenance, including personal protective equipment, first-aid equipment, fire protection facilities, venue setting, as well as testing and maintenance tools. Regarding vehicle mechanics, the major difference between EVs and fuel-propelled vehicles is that EVs involve complicated and different electromechanical technologies with high-voltage devices reaching 800 volts or above, and hence there are unique occupational safety risks associated with EV maintenance. The Vocational Training Council and other organisations such as the Occupational Safety and Health Council have launched training courses on EV maintenance in concert with the EMSD's plan to roll out the VRSs by incorporating EV maintenance in the middle of this year. Under the new initiative, EV maintenance will be divided into three levels, namely elementary, low voltage and high voltage. Having completed the relevant courses, vehicle mechanics will be qualified for the corresponding EV maintenance services.
3. Upon receipt of the voluntary registration applications from vehicle maintenance workshops or vehicle mechanics, the EMSD will review and approve them based on the relevant qualification requirements for registration, including carrying out site inspections of the maintenance workshops to ensure compliance with the requirements and vetting the qualifications and work experiences of the mechanics. Under the VRSs, vehicle mechanics are required to participate in continuing professional development, while the EMSD will conduct regular audit inspections of vehicle maintenance workshops to see whether the workshops and mechanics comply with the Practical Guidelines for Vehicle Maintenance Workshops, the Code of Conduct and the Practice Guidelines for Electric Vehicle Maintenance, and will provide guidance and appropriate support for relevant registered workshops and mechanics. The EMSD will take appropriate disciplinary action against registered vehicle maintenance workshops or mechanics with poor performance. Any registered workshop or mechanic found to have engaged in illegal conduct will be referred to relevant departments for follow-up.
4. Making reference to the practices of other jurisdictions, the Government starts with launching the systematic training courses and improving the VRSs to cover EV maintenance, which will be officially implemented in mid-2024. At the same time, the Government is studying the feasibility of implementing mandatory registration schemes as well as working closely with the VMTAC towards the goal of supporting the vehicle maintenance industry to keep abreast of the times, attract new talent, ensure the sustainable and healthy development of the trade, and minimise the impact on the trade

and the livelihood of practitioners. When the proposed plan and timetable for the mandatory registration schemes are established, the Government will announce them in due course. The Vehicle Maintenance Registration Unit of the EMSD is responsible for matters related to the implementation and promotion of the vehicle maintenance registration schemes, including the above-mentioned work. The estimated expenditure for the relevant work in 2024-25 is \$2.05 million.

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