

Press release

LCQ12: Government vehicles

Wednesday, May 23, 2012

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Kwok-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 23):

Question:

In recent years, the Government has actively promoted many environmental protection measures, and has introduced legislation to regulate the idling of motor vehicle engines (i.e. the requirement of "switching off idling engines"), yet some members of the public and environmental groups have reflected to me that the Government has all along ignored the work on environmental protection, and has not set an example itself in promoting environmental protection, e.g. at present most government private cars do not meet the qualifying standards for environment-friendly petrol private cars (qualifying standards); and they have also pointed out that the government vehicles provided for Heads of Departments, Directors of Bureaux, Secretaries and even the Chief Executive (CE) all have large fuel tanks, high emission and high fuel consumption, and do not meet the qualifying standards of environment-friendly private cars. Further, they also found that the drivers of government private cars do not switch off idling engines when they are in the streets. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the current number of government private cars; among them, the number of environment-friendly private cars; and the numbers of government private cars which meet the qualifying standards and those do not, together with the average purchasing prices of such private cars, broken down by fuel tank capacity (set out in the table below);

Fuel tank capacity	Number of government private cars which meet the qualifying standards for environment-friendly petrol private cars (qualifying standards)	Number of government private cars which do not meet the qualifying standards friendly petrol private cars (qualifying standards)	Average purchasing price
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Under
1 500 c.c.
1 500 to
2 500 c.c.
2 500 to
3 500 c.c.
3 500 to
4 500 c.c.
Over
4 500 c.c.

(b) of the expenditure on fuel consumption by government private cars in each of the past five years;

(c) whether the Government will immediately use environment-friendly private cars with capacities under 1 500 c.c. that meet the qualifying standards as government private cars across the board (including those for Heads of Departments, Directors of Bureaux, Secretaries and CE); and

(d) whether, since the implementation of the Motor Vehicle Idling (Fixed Penalty) (Cap 611), Penalty Notices were issued to government drivers for contravening the requirement of switching off idling engines; if so, of the total number of Penalty Notices issued to them; if not, the reasons for that, and whether these reasons include the privilege of senior government officials to enjoy air conditioning in cars without switching off idling engines to waste public money?

Reply:

President,

(a) All government vehicles meet the statutory emission standards applicable at the time of procurement. There are currently 1 336 cars in the government fleet. Since the introduction of the Environment-friendly (EF) Petrol Private Cars Tax Incentive Scheme (the Scheme) by the Environmental Protection Department in April 2007, the Government has purchased 890 cars including 21 electric cars and 869 petrol or hybrid cars. All these vehicles meet the standards of the Scheme. As for the 446 cars which were procured before the introduction of the Scheme, we will replace them with electric cars or EF cars when they are due for replacement. Details of the cylinder capacity of the cars in the government fleet are listed in Annex 1.

(b) The expenditure on fuel is affected to a large extent by fuel price and vehicle mileage, and is therefore not a good indicator of the fuel efficiency. The average contract fuel price procured by the Government between 2007 and 2011 has increased by about 46.1%. During the same period, there has been continuous improvement in the fuel efficiency (i.e. kilometres run per litre of fuel) for government cars. The fuel efficiency has increased by 12.3 % from about 8.1 km/litre in 2007 to about 9.1 km/litre in 2011. The expenditure on fuel and the fuel efficiency of government cars between 2007 and 2011 are listed in Annex 2.

(c) The Government will take into consideration the operational requirements and needs of the users when drawing up specifications of the vehicles to be procured. For example, a seven seater multi-purpose car will be needed for carrying more passengers and working gears, whereas a car used for receiving visiting guests will have to meet protocol requirements, etc.

The Government would give priority to EF vehicles, including electric vehicles and vehicles meeting the standards of the Scheme when replacing vehicles in the government fleet, subject to the availability of suitable models on the market and operational and resource consideration.

(d) Motor Vehicle Idling (Fixed Penalty) Ordinance (Chapter 611) (the Ordinance) came into effect in December last year. The Ordinance applies to all vehicles and drivers in HKSAR, including government vehicles and drivers. Since the commencement of the Ordinance, no driver has been issued with Penalty Notice by the law enforcement officers because of contravention of the idling prohibition. Besides, the Government Logistics Department has issued guidelines to remind all drivers of government vehicles to strictly comply with the requirements of the Ordinance. If drivers of government vehicles are found to have contravened the idling prohibition and are issued with Penalty Notices, they may be subject to disciplinary action by their respective departments.

Ends