

PR003/2012

Ngong Ping Cable Car Inspection Confirms System Safety

Fleet Replacement of Bullwheel Bearings and Advancement of Annual Servicing for Enhanced Reliability

(Hong Kong, 3 February 2012) Ngong Ping 360 Limited (NP360) today provided preliminary findings from its investigation into the 25 January 2012 incident when a faulty bearing in a bullwheel on Airport Island Angle Station caused a disruption to cable car services.

Safety Assured

Following the incident, Ngong Ping 360 established a technical investigation team comprising of Ngong Ping 360 engineers and the cable car system manufacturer from Italy.

Preliminary investigation and a fleet check of similar bearings have confirmed the overall safety of the cable car system and the proper performance of the automatic monitoring system which triggered the system to bring cable car operations to a safe stop upon detection of the bearing fault.

Preliminary Technical Findings

After lifting the bullwheel and removing the concerned bearing from its housing, engineers noted irregular wear on the surface of the bearing's inner ring. This would have affected smooth rotation of the bearing, resulting in slight vibrations which were picked up by the automatic monitoring system. This does not impact safe cable car operations but could result in less comfortable rides and possible stoppage should the vibration sensors be triggered. Therefore, as a prudent measure, the bearing will be replaced as announced earlier. In the meantime, the bearing will be sent to a laboratory for analysis.

Reliability Enhancement Actions

1. Fleet replacement of bullwheel bearings

Bearings on the six other bullwheels in the system have not shown any irregularity during normal operation. Nevertheless, in its aim to step up the reliability of the cable car operations, NP360 has decided to replace all six bearings as a prudent measure.

2. Advancement of Annual Servicing and Examination

Annual servicing inspection and tests to assure the safety, reliability and functionality of the cable car system followed by examinations by an independent ropeway surveyor are regulatory requirements which have traditionally been conducted in June each year.

To give further assurance to the public before re-opening the system for guest service, Ngong Ping 360 will advance this year's annual servicing from June to take place after all bullwheel bearings have been replaced.

Works Programme

The actual work in replacing the bearings, as well as the subsequent checks and tests, are expected to take several weeks. Replacement work aside, time is needed to erect lifting frames for the bullwheels which weigh either four or eight tonnes. The remote location of the Nei Lak Shan Angle Station adds to the complexity of the work as all heavy engineering materials have to be transported to the site by helicopter, which requires coordination with the relevant service providers and government departments.

Adding the several days required for the annual servicing and examination by an independent ropeway surveyor, it is estimated that the work at hand will take about two months. However, weather will also be a determining factor in how quickly the materials can be delivered and the progress of works.

NP360 will announce the exact service resumption date after completion of the annual examination.

Ngong Ping 360's Managing Director Mr. Wilson Shao said: "We understand the inconvenience that the temporary closure will cause to our guests. While experts have re-confirmed the safety of the system, we hope our guests will appreciate the prudent approach we are taking to step up reliability and enhance ride comfort for our guests. The measures we take in the short term will help us achieve the important goal of minimizing service disruptions in the future."

Customer Service

While engineering works are progressing, NP360 will continue reviewing its customer service measures and will be introducing improvements to more effectively care for and communicate with guests in the event of service disruptions in the future.

During the temporary closure period for maintenance and servicing, guests who have booked tickets in advance can change their itineraries and receive assistance on other ticketing matters at temporary service points set up next to the Customer Service Centres at three MTR stations (Lai King, Hong Kong and Kowloon Tong). The temporary service points will be opened from 10:00am to 6:00pm.

In the meantime, Ngong Ping Village will remain open. Guests can access the village by bus or taxi. For more information, visitors can call the Ngong Ping 360 hotline at 3666 0606 or browse its website at www.np360.com.hk.

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