

Newspaper: TODAY

Date: 24 February 2006

Title: Deviate from routes should buses bunch

I refer to SBS Transit's letter, "Why 'bus-bunching' happens" (Feb 23).

When two buses leave the terminal just two minutes apart and follow their usual routes, waiting passengers will experience extended delays.

So, I have a suggestion: The bus operators should consider sending the first bus directly to a point in the middle of the route. This will reduce the waiting time for passengers along the second half of the route. The other bus should follow its normal route.

Boris Chan

Reply from SBS Transit

I refer to the letter "Deviate from routes should buses bunch" by Mr Boris Chan dated 24 February 2006.

With regard to Mr Chan's suggestion, SBS Transit has already put the practice in place. In our current practice, if two buses of the same service arrive at the terminal at about the same time whereby the first bus is significantly late, our staff at the interchange will dispatch the first bus to start its service from a mid point of the route while the second bus will follow the normal route. This practice will avoid further bus bunching and alleviate excessive waiting time for the commuters. But we will only do this when the first bus is significantly late.

If the first bus is marginally late by 3 minutes or so, our staff will reschedule the departure time of the second bus provided that there is enough parking space at the terminal and does not obstruct other buses that are coming to the terminal.

However, we would like to highlight that the practice of dispatching the first bus that is significantly late to start its service from a mid point of the route is not applicable for all bus services. Take for example Service 53 which ply from Bishan interchange to Terminal 2 at Changi Airport. Before the bus terminates at Terminal 2, it picks up passengers from Terminal 1. These passengers can choose not to alight when the bus terminates at Terminal 2. They can continue to remain in the bus and wait for the bus to pick up passengers from Terminal 2 and continue with the journey towards Bishan interchange. As such, we are unable to deploy the bus to start service from a mid-point as these passengers may want to alight at bus stops before the midpoint.

We would like to assure Mr Chan that we have put practices in place to minimise bus bunching or irregular frequencies but these practices may not be applicable for all bus services.

We thank Mr Chan for his feedback.

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