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Accident won't affect plan for LRT opening

By TAD STONER

THE Light Rail Transit (LRT) system said yesterday's accident involving a 12-year-old girl would not affect its opening schedule.

The accident, the fifteenth on the system since mid-March, occurred just before noon at On Ting Estate in Tuen Mun.

A police spokesman said Choi Man-fung was waiting at the crowded On Ting station to board a Light Rail Vehicle as part of the system's three-day free-ride program.

"Because of the crowds she was pushed onto the tracks just as the train was arriving," he said. She suffered slight injuries to her face and her left hand.

However, an LRT spokesman contradicted the police account, claiming the girl had disregarded pedestrian safety rules and walked into the train as it was going over a pedestrian crossing.

Miss Choi was taken to Yan Oi Clinic and later admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital in fair condition.

"The running (of the LRT) was affected for only 10 minutes before the problem was cleared," said the spokesman.

An unofficial source at the LRT said the contradiction in accounts could have arisen because of a misunderstanding as to where the station platform really begins.

"There is a waiting area at the foot of the ramp that leads to the platform and the girl came out from this area, which can be pretty crowded sometimes," the source said.

"The platform itself is three feet high and if she had fallen from that, it would have been quite serious.

"Whether she was pushed or came out voluntarily, we don't know. But it's terrible that the police are saying she was pushed off the platform, especially now during our open days," the source said.

"We have always said that people should not step out from the yellow line. We have done a lot of publicity work on this and stressed it time and time again. In many ways, it's finally up to the residents themselves," he said.

A Transport Branch spokesman appealed to parents and teachers to educate children about road behaviour but declined to comment on the incident. "Our response is that the appropriate thing is to let the police carry on with their investigation," he said.