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Paralysed, after hitting barrier

By Joyce Teo

A 40-YEAR-OLD father of two who cycled into a metal barrier has been left paralysed from the neck down.

At least two others have rammed into the grey inverted U-shaped frames put up on a pedestrian bridge in Tampines earlier this week.

This prompted Tampines GRC MP Ong Kian Min, who is also chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport, to call for the removal of the 'stupidest device I've ever seen'.

After waiting in vain for a day for the [Land Transport Authority](#) to get rid of the barriers or put up warnings, he took matters into his own hands. Yesterday evening he got contractors to saw them off.

'The place is not brightly lit. We can't afford any more accidents,' he said.

The LTA did not tell the Tampines transport committee it was putting up the barriers, he said, or the installation could have been publicised.

'It seems from this case that safety is not a criterion in their planning.'

The LTA said the barrier was to discourage cyclists from riding on the pedestrian bridge over Tampines Expressway, near Tampines Street 43.

It installed it at one end of the bridge on Tuesday. Another was to be put in at the other end the next day.

But before that went up, the father of a two-year-old girl and a seven-year-old boy rode into the first.

The accident happened around 6.45am, as the Pasir Ris resident cycled to the Tampines Soka Centre. He is in intensive care and does not know how badly injured he is.

His wife has asked that he remain anonymous.

His brother-in-law said: 'He is confirmed permanently paralysed from the neck down.'

He added: 'If they'd installed both barriers at the same time at least people would be aware of them when they used the bridge. There were also no warning signs.'

Mr Ong heard of the accident on Thursday. That night, he got contractors to place plywood across the metal frames so cyclists can see them, and if they do run into them will not be badly hurt.

Have 'some form of obstacle' to encourage cyclists to dismount or slow down, he said, but it should

not cause injury.

The LTA said yesterday it has installed seven of these barriers on pedestrian bridges since 1997, with 'no incident or adverse feedback'.

It blamed the contractor for the accident, saying it did not submit a 'method statement' on how it planned to install the barriers, and did not put up both on the same day.

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