

## **Measures to facilitate passenger flow for Chinese New Year Holiday**

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The Government announced today (January 5) a number of measures to facilitate passenger flow at the control points for the coming Chinese New Year Holiday period.

In anticipation of a large number of Mainland visitor arrivals during the coming Chinese New Year Holiday golden week, the Tourism Commission has recently convened a coordinating meeting involving the Immigration Department (ImmD), the Hong Kong-Guangdong Cooperation Coordination Unit, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC), the Federation of Hong Kong Hotels Owners and the Hong Kong Hotels Association.

A number of measures, which had been proved to be effective in the last National Day holiday, will be taken for the Chinese New Year Holiday to ensure efficient and effective processing of all visitors on arrival at the boundary control points. These measures include -

- requesting travel agents to submit estimates of number of tour groups to the ImmD;
- reminding travel agents to submit details of group tour members timely and accurately;
- reminding travel agents to send tour guides to receive all tour groups in a timely manner;
- organising briefings for travel agents and tour guides on clearance procedures and familiarisation programmes to the control points;
- requesting travel agents not to put tour groups on Lok Ma Chau/ Huanggang Shuttle Buses ("yellow buses") on peak traffic days;
- requiring travel agents to confirm hotel booking before accepting tour groups; and
- requesting coach operators to put tour groups and transit visitors on separate coaches.

Cooperation has been sought from the trade on the above measures. In addition, the Special Administrative Region Government has met with the Guangdong and Shenzhen tourism authorities. Both sides exchanged information on the arrangements made to facilitate entry of tour groups at the control points during the

holiday and would work closely to ensure both Hong Kong and Mainland travel agents comply with the requirements.

To provide consumer protection to our visitors, the TIC will continue to implement their 100% refund policy and the HKTB will deploy staff at Lo Wu and China Ferry Terminal to greet incoming visitors and distribute shopping and tourism-related information, as during previous Mainland golden week holidays.

The manning hours of HKTB's visitors' hotline (2508 1234) will be extended during the Chinese New Year Holiday (February 1 to 5), running from 8 am to 9 pm. The TIC will also arrange their staff to handle complaints received through their hotline (2807 0707) during the holiday.

The Commissioner for Tourism, Mrs Rebecca Lai said, "Following the success of the cooperation between relevant government departments in the SAR, the trade and the Mainland authorities in the last National Day holiday, we are working together again this time to enhance passengers' experience at the control points to give them a favourable first impression of Hong Kong. We have learnt from the experience of the previous Mainland golden week holidays and have further pinned down the problems to address them. We hope that our visitors will find their experience at the control points improved every time."

End/ Sunday, January 5, 2003

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