

Preparation for Labour Day Golden Week

The Tourism Commission has teamed up with various government departments and the tourism industry in drawing up measures to prepare for the possible surge of visitors from the Mainland during the Labour Day Golden Week period.

These measures include enhancing the flow of visitors at various boundary control points, increasing the capacity of transportation facilities, and stepping up promotion and information dissemination to visitors on consumer protection, and advising locals and Mainland visitors to cross the boundary via Lo Wu control point and by sea as far as possible.

The Acting Commissioner for Tourism, Ms Maisie Cheng, said, "Labour Day Golden Week is the traditional peak travel period for Mainland tourists and Hong Kong has always been a popular destination for Mainland tourists.

"The current indications are that about 420,000 visitors may arrive from the Mainland over the 10-day period (from April 29 to May 8), and it is estimated that about 60% will be Individual Visit Scheme visitors and about 10% will come in tour groups. About 85% of the Mainland visitors will enter Hong Kong via land control points."

As April 29 to May 8 is not only the Labour Day Golden Week, it also coincides with the two long weekends in Hong Kong connecting the public holiday on May 1 and Buddha Festival, it is anticipated that many Hong Kong residents will go to the Mainland during the period, putting a considerable burden on the land control points.

Ms Cheng said the departments had increased manpower and resources to handle the peak period for boundary crossing. For example, the Immigration Department will deploy 93 additional staff members to the land control points to provide support.

To alleviate the burden of various land control points, the Transport Department will issue ad-hoc quotas to cross-boundary coaches to increase their carrying capacity. A Joint Command Centre will also be activated during the Golden Week to monitor the visitor flow at land control points and take prompt action if necessary.

"We have all along been maintaining a close liaison

with the Guangdong Provincial Tourism Administration to monitor the visitor flow and the number of arrivals. The Government will continue to adopt a series of measures that have been effective to facilitate smooth visitor flow in previous peak periods, and the departments will flexibly deploy resources according to the situation," Ms Cheng said.

"While we have already implemented all possible measures and deployed resources, as the Golden Week overlaps the long weekends in Hong Kong, we encourage both Mainland tourists and Hong Kong residents who plan to enter into or leave Hong Kong during the Golden Week period to use Lo Wu control point, which has a larger handling capacity or to come by sea so as to alleviate the burden on Lok Ma Chau control point. They should avoid crossing the boundary during the morning and evening peak hours," she added.

As it is anticipated that there will be a number of group tour visitors coming to Hong Kong, the hotel sector indicated that the demand for hotel rooms (in particular medium-tariff hotels) has been strong. The Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong has again reminded inbound travel agents to ensure confirmation of accommodation before taking up tour groups from the Mainland. In addition, the Travel Industry Council has also asked travel agents to make appropriate arrangements on their itineraries to avoid bunching of visitors at any one attraction so that visitors have a pleasant stay in Hong Kong.

To assist visitors in planning their trip, the Immigration Department will upload the daily arrivals at all control points on its website and the Hong Kong Hotels Association will also provide the hotel occupancy forecast on its website (www.hkha.org). Such information will also be hyperlinked to the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB)'s website (www.discoverhongkong.com) and a joint website with the Mainland and Macau tourism authorities (visitgd.com) for visitors' reference. In addition, the HKTB and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong will extend their hotline service to 9pm during the Golden Week to help visitors with enquiries.

"I would suggest our visitors as well as our local residents make appropriate arrangements for hotel accommodation and transportation before departure on their trips. To have an enjoyable and carefree trip, residents who are travelling abroad should buy suitable

travel insurance according to their own needs," Ms Cheng concluded.

Ends