

Tourism Commission co-ordinates preparations for Chinese New Year Golden Week

The Tourism Commission, in co-ordination with relevant government departments and the local travel industry, has drawn up various measures to prepare for the anticipated increase in Mainland visitor arrivals during the Chinese New Year (CNY) Golden Week, a government spokesman said today (January 21).

The commission had earlier communicated with the Guangdong Provincial Tourism Administration regarding the preparatory work and measures for the Golden Week. The two sides have also established an emergency liaison mechanism for the timely handling of unexpected events involving travellers of both places.

The spokesman said that during the Golden Week, relevant government departments would deploy appropriate manpower resources and arrange transport facilities to ensure the provision of efficient cross-boundary services for visitors.

The Joint Command Centre set up by the Immigration Department, the Police and other relevant departments would be activated during the period to monitor the situation at land control points and take contingency action where necessary, he said.

"To avoid congestion at Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau control points, we encourage Mainland visitors and local residents to cross the boundary via Shenzhen Bay or Lok Ma Chau Spur Line control points as far as possible, and to avoid crossing the boundary during peak hours in the morning and evening during the Golden Week period," the spokesman said.

To better protect the interests of visitors, the Government and the travel industry would continue to implement various measures to promote "honest and quality tourism" during the CNY Golden Week, he added.

"On law enforcement, the Customs and Excise Department will closely co-operate with the Police in stepping up inspection of retail shops targeting Mainland group tours.

"As regards publicity, the Consumer Council will continue to promote the 'Shop Smart in Hong Kong' dedicated website for Mainland tourists.

"The Government and the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) will also distribute pamphlets and publicity materials to enhance visitors' awareness of their consumer rights and consumption choices in Hong Kong.

"At the same time, the Customs, the Police, the Consumer Council and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) will handle visitors' complaints in Hong Kong under a fast-track referral system," the spokesman said.

To strengthen the regulation of inbound travel agents receiving Mainland group tours, the TIC will continue to strictly enforce a series of measures.

These include requiring registered retail shops receiving Mainland group tours to implement the six-month 100% refund protection scheme, as well as requiring local agents receiving Mainland group tours to register the "tour confirmation agreement" with the TIC before the tour groups arrive in Hong Kong, and distribute the itinerary to group tour visitors to enhance transparency. The Government has reminded the TIC to step up inspections and take rigorous enforcement action against travel agents and tour guides on non-compliance.

"With the Tourism Commission's co-ordination, the major tourist attractions will suitably extend their operating hours and devise measures and contingency arrangements for crowd control," the spokesman said.

To assist visitors in planning their trips, the Immigration Department will upload the daily arrival figures at all control points on its website (www.immd.gov.hk) from

January 23 to February 2. Such information will also be hyperlinked to HKTB's website (www.discoverhongkong.com) for visitors' reference.

Visitors may call the service hotline of the TIC (2807 0707), HKTB (2508 1234) and Consumer Council (2929 2222) for enquiries.

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