

Tourism Commission co-ordinates preparations for peak tourist arrival during "Chinese New Year Golden Week"

The Tourism Commission, in co-ordination with the relevant government departments and the local travel industry, has drawn up various measures to prepare for Mainland visitor arrivals during Mainland's "Chinese New Year Golden Week" (Golden Week) (February 13 to 19), a government spokesman said today (February 10).

The spokesman said the commission had, through the mechanism established for golden weeks, liaised with the Guangdong Provincial Tourism Administration on information exchange, emergency handling, preparatory measures for the Golden Week as well as the timely handling of unexpected events involving travellers of both places.

He added that during the Golden Week, relevant government departments would deploy appropriate manpower 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.

"It is expected that the passenger traffic between February 12 and 21 will be very heavy. To avoid congestion during the peak hours at various boundary control points in the morning and evening, we suggest Mainland visitors and local residents to cross the boundary during less busy time slots during the Golden Week period," the spokesman said.

"Mainland visitors planning to come to Hong Kong during the period are also reminded to confirm their accommodation arrangements prior to their arrival," 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 Chinese New Year Golden Week.

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 consumer awareness, the Consumer Council will continue to promote the "Shop Smart in Hong Kong" website dedicated for Mainland tourists. The Government and the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) will distribute pamphlets and publicity materials at Visitor Service Centres to enhance visitors' awareness of their consumer rights and consumption choices in Hong Kong, as well as the Quality Travel Services Scheme. At the same time, the Customs and Excise Department, 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.

To strengthen the regulation of inbound travel agents receiving Mainland group tours, TIC will continue to strictly enforce a series of measures. These include requiring registered retail shops receiving Mainland group tours to adhere to the requirements of the six-month full refund protection scheme, requiring local agents receiving Mainland group tours to register with TIC the "tour confirmation agreement" prior to the tour groups' arrival in Hong Kong, and distributing the itinerary to group tour visitors to enhance transparency. The Government has reminded TIC to step up inspection 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 February 11 to 22. Such information will also be hyperlinked to HKTB's website (www.discoverhongkong.com) for visitors' reference.

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

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