

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

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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 the Mainland's "Chinese New Year Golden Week" (Golden Week) (February 2 to 8), a government spokesman said today (January 31).

The spokesman said the Commission had, through the mechanism established for "golden weeks", liaised with the Guangdong and Shenzhen tourism authorities on information exchange, emergency handling and preparatory measures for Golden Week as well as the timely handling of unexpected events involving travellers of both places.

He added that during 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 will be activated during the period to monitor the situation at land control points and take contingency action where necessary.

"It is expected that passenger traffic between February 2 and 8 will be very heavy. To avoid congestion during the morning and evening peak hours at various boundary control points, we suggest that Mainland visitors and local residents cross the boundary at less busy hours during the Golden Week period," the spokesman said.

"Mainland visitors planning to come to Hong Kong during this 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 will continue to implement various measures to promote "honest and quality tourism" during 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 to Mainland tourists. The Government and the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) will distribute pamphlets and publicity materials at major boundary control points, areas with major registered shops and Visitor Service Centres to enhance visitors' awareness of their consumer rights, consumption choices in Hong Kong, and the Quality Tourism 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 the receiving arrangements for inbound Mainland group tours and to protect visitors' rights, the TIC will implement a series of new measures starting from February 1. These include requiring receiving travel agents to assign one tourist guide to accompany a Mainland inbound tour throughout its stay in Hong Kong and to pay these tourist guides for their services. Local agents receiving Mainland group tours are required to sign contracts with the Mainland organising agents to clarify mutual responsibilities and to distribute the itinerary to group tour visitors. Tourist guides should also read out specific information relating to the itinerary as stipulated by the TIC. Demerit point systems will also be introduced for travel agents and tourist guides.

"With the Tourism Commission's co-ordination, the major tourist attractions will extend their operating hours as appropriate 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](http://www.immd.gov.hk)) from February 2 to 9. Such information will also be hyperlinked to the HKTB's website ([www.discoverhongkong.com](http://www.discoverhongkong.com)) for visitors' reference.

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

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