

Travel Agents Registry accepts applications for ex gratia payment from Travel Industry Compensation Fund from customers of SIG Holiday Limited

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The Travel Agents Registry (TAR) has been notified by SIG Holiday Limited (SIG) that the main office of SIG ceased operation with effect from 6pm today (January 4).

The TAR understands that SIG has been refunding customers with cash at its main office since mid-December, after reports of its dishonoured cheques. Nonetheless, some SIG customers had yet to be refunded as at 6pm today.

The TAR has begun to accept applications for ex gratia payment from the Travel Industry Compensation Fund (TICF) from SIG customers who have not been properly refunded. In the past weeks, the TAR and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) have been contacting SIG customers, who called their hotlines for assistance previously, to suggest applying for ex gratia payment from the TICF if they have not been refunded.

A spokesman for the TAR said that there had been one application for ex gratia payment from the TICF as at 6pm today. Some SIG customers have indicated their intention to apply for ex gratia payment. The TAR will facilitate their application and will continue to monitor developments. In addition, some SIG customers have indicated that they would make reports to the Police for assistance.

As the circumstances of each case vary, the TAR suggests that SIG customers should call the TICF Management Board hotline at 3151 7945 in advance to check what documents are required and to make appointments for their applications at the office of the TAR. Calls made outside office hours (i.e. those made on weekends, public holidays and before 9am and after 6pm on weekdays) will be recorded and returned on the following working day.

The spokesman added that affected SIG customers are required to pay back the ex gratia payments to the TICF if they receive a refund from SIG afterwards.

SIG closed all its five branches at the same time on November 29, 2012. The TAR announced on December 3 that SIG's travel agents licence would expire and be revoked on December 4. The main office of SIG remained open afterwards to handle refund requests from customers. The TIC and the TAR have received enquiries and complaints from SIG customers since December 18 about dishonoured cheques issued

by SIG. SIG arranged for cash refunds at its main office and pledged to finish all refunding by December 31.

Ends/Friday, January 4, 2013

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