

Preparations for National Day Golden Week completed

The Tourism Commission, in co-operation with relevant government departments and the local travel industry, has drawn up various measures to prepare for Mainland visitor arrivals during National Day Golden Week (October 1 to 7), a Government spokesman said today (September 28).

The spokesman said the Tourism Commission had, through the mechanism for information exchange and emergency handling established for Golden Weeks, liaised with Guangdong and Shenzhen tourism authorities on the relevant preparatory and co-ordination measures, 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 co-ordinate transport services 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 from October 1 to 7 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.

"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 (Customs) and the Police will step 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. An advisory note on consumer rights for Mainland group tour visitors has been uploaded to the websites of the Tourism Commission and relevant bodies, and was also published in the Mainland through the China National Tourism Administration. The Government and the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) will distribute publicity materials at major boundary control points including Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau and Visitor Service Centres to enhance visitors' awareness of their consumer rights, consumption choices in Hong Kong and the Quality Tourism Services Scheme. The operating hours of the HKTB Visitor Hotline will be extended from 9am to 8pm on October 1 to 7.

At the same time, to strengthen the regulation of arrangements for receiving inbound Mainland group tours and to protect visitors' rights, the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) will continue to enforce the regulatory measures that were implemented in February 2011 and the new measure implemented in April this year, which requires Hong Kong travel agents to register with the TIC the itineraries of Mainland inbound tours that they received together with proof of accommodation, within specified period. The Customs, the Police, the Consumer Council and the TIC will handle visitors' complaints in Hong Kong under a fast-track referral system.

"With the Tourism Commission's co-ordination, the major tourist attractions will extend their opening hours as appropriate and formulate 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 October 1 to 7. Such information will also be hyperlinked to the HKTB website (www.discoverhongkong.com) for visitors' reference.

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

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