

Co-ordination efforts for visitors to Hong Kong during Chinese New Year Golden Week

The Tourism Commission, in co-operation with relevant government departments and the local travel industry, has drawn up various measures to cope with the large tourist flow between Hong Kong and the Mainland during the Chinese New Year Golden Week (February 18 to 24), a Government spokesman said today (February 15).

The spokesman said the Tourism Commission has set up a mechanism for information exchange on and emergency handling of Golden Weeks with the tourism authorities in Guangdong and Shenzhen.

Relevant government departments would also enhance manpower and co-ordinate transport and cross-boundary services.

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 February 18 to 24 will be very heavy. To avoid congestion during the morning and evening peak hours at various boundary control points, we urge Mainland visitors and local residents to 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," he said.

On law enforcement, the Customs and Excise Department (Customs) and the Police will step up the inspection of retail shops targeting Mainland group tours.

As regards consumer awareness, 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 Hong Kong Tourism Board's (HKTB) Visitor Hotline will be extended to operate from 9am to 9pm on February 19 and 20.

To protect group tour visitors' rights, the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) will continue to enforce a series of regulatory measures on arrangements for

receiving inbound Mainland group tours, which includes requiring Hong Kong travel agents to register with the TIC the itineraries of the 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. Moreover, the TIC will deploy additional manpower for conducting inspections in districts where many of the registered shops are located, such as Hung Hom and To Kwa Wan, as well as offering immediate assistance to tourists and tourist guides. In case of emergency situations, inbound tourists, tour escorts and tourist guides of inbound tour groups can also seek assistance directly from the TIC by calling its service hotline.

"As regards major tourist attractions, with the Tourism Commission's co-ordination, they 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 February 18 to 24. Such information will also be hyperlinked to the HKTB's 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.

Ends/Sunday, February 15, 2015

Issued at HKT 15:00