

Co-ordination measures drawn up for visitors to Hong Kong during National Day Golden Week

The Tourism Commission, in co-operation with relevant government departments, major tourist attractions, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC), has drawn up relevant measures to cope with the tourist flow between Hong Kong and the Mainland during the National Day Golden Week (October 1 to 8), a Government spokesman said today (September 29).

Relevant government departments will enhance manpower at all control points and co-ordinate transport and cross-boundary services during the National Day Golden Week.

The Inter-departmental Joint Command Centre set up by the Immigration Department, the Police, the Customs and Excise Department (Customs) and other relevant departments will be activated during the period to monitor the situation at each land control point, as well as to maintain close liaison with the relevant Mainland counterparts and take contingency action where necessary.

In addition, the Tourism Commission will have effective communications with the tourism authorities in Guangdong and Shenzhen according to the mechanism for information exchange and emergency handling of Golden Weeks.

"It is expected that passenger traffic from October 1 to 8 will be heavier than usual. 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," the spokesman said.

On law enforcement, Customs and the Police will step up inspection of retail shops targeting Mainland group tours, so as to combat unfair trade practices such as coerced shopping.

As regards consumer awareness, the Tourism Commission and the HKTB have both deployed staff to distribute souvenirs and leaflets printed with messages concerning consumer rights and channels for lodging complaints to Mainland visitors at the Lo Wu Control Point, the Lok Ma Chau Control Point and other popular

attractions, so as to enhance Mainland tourists' awareness of the protection of their own rights. An advisory note on consumer rights for Mainland group tour visitors has also been uploaded to the websites of the Tourism Commission and relevant bodies, and published in the Mainland through the China National Tourism Administration. The HKTB hotline will operate from 9am to 6pm between October 1 and 8.

To protect group tour visitors' rights, the 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 a specified period. 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, and offer immediate assistance to tourists and tourist guides during the National Day Golden Week. In case of emergency, inbound tourists, tour escorts and tourist guides can also seek assistance directly from the TIC by calling its service hotline.

"With the Tourism Commission's co-ordination, major tourist attractions will extend their opening hours as appropriate and formulate measures and contingency arrangements for crowd control during the National Day Golden Week. At the same time, the Tourism Commission, in conjunction with the TIC, appeals to the relevant travel agents and restaurants targeting Mainland tour groups to be vigilant in ensuring that appropriate measures are taken in the orderly management of tourists and coach flows," the spokesman said.

To assist visitors in planning their trips, the Immigration Department will upload the daily arrival figures at all control points to its website (www.immd.gov.hk) from October 1 to 8. Such information will also be hyperlinked to the HKTB's website (www.discoverhongkong.com) for visitors' reference.

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

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