

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 7), a Government spokesman said today (September 27).

Relevant government departments will strengthen 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 relevant Mainland counterparts and take contingency actions where necessary.

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

"It is expected that passenger traffic from October 1 to 7 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.

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 September 29 to October 8. Such information will also be hyperlinked to the HKTB's website (www.discoverhongkong.com) for visitors' reference. In addition, visitors may also check the estimated waiting time at all land boundary control points via the Immigration Mobile Application, which can be downloaded free of charge from the Apple App Store (supports iOS version 5.1.1 or above) and Google Play (supports Android version 2.2 or above).

With the Tourism Commission's co-ordination, major tourist attractions will extend their opening hours and formulate crowd control measures and contingency arrangements during the National Day Golden Week. The Tourism Commission, in collaboration with the TIC, will also appeal to travel agents and restaurants targeting Mainland tour groups in ensuring that appropriate measures are taken in the orderly management of tourist and coach flows.

As regards tourist education on consumer awareness, the Tourism Commission and the HKTB have 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 Boundary Control Point, the Hung Hom Control Point and popular attractions, so as to enhance their 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 local bodies for Mainland visitors' reference.

Meanwhile, to protect group tour visitors' rights, the TIC will enforce a series of regulatory measures on arrangements for receiving inbound Mainland group tours, which include requiring Hong Kong travel agents to register with the TIC the itineraries of the Mainland inbound tours that they receive together with proof of accommodation within a specified period. During the National Day Golden Week, the TIC will deploy additional manpower for conducting inspections in districts where many of the registered shops are located and offer immediate assistance to tourists and tourist guides. In addition, Customs and the Police will step up inspection of retail shops targeting Mainland tour groups, so as to combat unfair trade practices such as coerced shopping.

The Tourism Commission has provided the hotlines of the relevant local organisations to inbound tour group visitors via the tourism authorities in Guangdong and Shenzhen. During the National Day Golden Week, in case of emergency, Mainland inbound group tourists, tour escorts and tourist guides can seek assistance from the TIC by calling its service hotline 2807 0707 (operating from 9am to midnight). As for enquiries or complaints concerning consumer rights, they can call the HKTB hotline 2508 1234 (operating from 9am to 6pm) or the Consumer Council hotline 2929 2222 (operating from 9am to 5.30pm).