

Hong Kong enhances air cargo security upon full implementation of ICAO policy direction (with photo)

Hong Kong has successfully implemented the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)'s policy direction on air cargo security, which has come into effect globally today (July 1). The Director-General of Civil Aviation, Mr Victor Liu, expressed his gratitude to the air cargo industry for the sterling efforts of various stakeholders throughout the compliance process.

"Hong Kong has rolled out 100 per cent security screening for export air cargoes to meet the policy direction, as scheduled. The Civil Aviation Department (CAD) has recognised over 130 Regulated Air Cargo Screening Facilities (RACSFs) to conduct air cargo security screening at off-airport locations. Hong Kong's export air cargoes are now screened, either at the cargo terminals of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) or the RACSFs at off-airport locations. This has enhanced our status as one of the most secure air cargo hubs in the world, representing another milestone in consolidating Hong Kong's position as an international aviation hub," Mr Liu said.

"Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hong Kong's air cargo throughput at HKIA registered a high volume of over 4.5 million tonnes in the 2020-21 financial year. In particular, the volume of export air cargoes showed a strong growth of around 10 per cent over the previous year's figure. Achieving full compliance with the ICAO's policy direction amid the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is a highly commendable achievement, which would not have been made possible without the active collaborations of all stakeholders in the air cargo industry. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for the solid support, and we will continue to work together to maintain a high level of air cargo security," Mr Liu added.

To enhance the level of aviation security around the globe, the ICAO issued a policy direction in September 2016 with a view to strengthening air cargo security. As a way to meet the policy direction, all export air cargoes will be subject to security screening.

To assist and prepare Hong Kong's air cargo industry to meet the policy direction, the CAD, in consultation with the trade, launched the RACSF Scheme in October 2018 and invited interested parties to establish and operate air cargo screening facilities at off-airport locations. An 18-month transitional arrangement was implemented from January 2020 to June 2021 to increase the screening percentage for Hong Kong's export air cargoes to 100 per cent in phases.

