

# Immigration Department implements Advance Passenger Information System

The Immigration Department (ImmD) announced that the Advance Passenger Information (API) System was implemented today (September 3).

To meet the aviation security requirements of the Convention on International Civil Aviation and to align Hong Kong with other aviation hubs worldwide, as well as to enable the ImmD to further enhance its passenger clearance and enforcement capabilities to prevent undesirables, including potential non-refoulement claimants, from boarding flights heading to Hong Kong, the ImmD implemented the API System today, requiring aircraft operators to comply with the Immigration (Advance Passenger Information) Regulation (Cap. 115Q) by transmitting advance information to the ImmD about flights and passengers heading to Hong Kong.

An ImmD spokesman said, "During check-in for a flight heading to Hong Kong, the aircraft operator will capture the required API data from a traveller's travel document and transmit the API data of each traveller and the aircraft information to the API System, which will instantly process the information and provide a response message, i.e. a board or no-board direction, for each traveller back to the aircraft operator. The aircraft operator shall act upon the direction given through the API System, i.e. to allow or not allow specific travellers to board the aircraft heading to Hong Kong."

To allow sufficient time for over 100 aircraft operators to connect to the API system and to ensure the system will run in a smooth and orderly manner, the rollout will be carried out in phases. A transitional period of around 12 months will also be adopted. The offences and defences, and the miscellaneous provisions under Parts 4 and 5 of the Regulation will come into effect after the transitional period, starting from September 1, 2025.

The spokesman emphasised, "The freedom to travel and the right of Hong Kong residents to enter or leave Hong Kong are guaranteed under Article 31 of the Basic Law and Article 8 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights as set out in the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance (Cap.383). Such freedom and right are not affected by the implementation of the API System. The API system will not issue a no-board direction against Hong Kong permanent residents who enjoy the right of abode in Hong Kong."