

LCQ1: Facilitating immigration clearance of inbound tour groups

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yuet-ming and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (November 22):

Question:

Regarding facilitating immigration clearance of inbound tour groups, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of inbound tour groups in each month since January this year and, among them, the number of those which entered Hong Kong via land boundary control points (BCPs), and set out by month in a table the following statistical information in respect of the latter: BCPs used for immigration clearance, places of departure, average tour fares, and average per capita spending of tour group members;

(2) as it is learnt that the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, Shenzhen Bay Port and Heung Yuen Wai Control Point are the major land BCPs used by inbound tour groups, of the design passenger handling capacity, tour group receiving capability and upper limit in hardware provision of coach parking spaces of these three BCPs; whether it has projected the trend of these three BCPs in receiving inbound tour groups and their division of work; and

(3) of the current provision of software and hardware ancillary facilities at the three BCPs mentioned in (2) to facilitate immigration clearance of inbound tour groups, and the measures to be put in place at these BCPs in the future to further facilitate immigration clearance of inbound tour groups?

Reply:

President,

In respect of the question raised by the Hon Chan Yuet-ming, having consulted the Security Bureau, the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the Travel Industry Authority (TIA), the reply is as follows:

(1) According to requirements under the Directives for Licensees issued by the TIA pursuant to the Travel Industry Ordinance (Cap. 634), licensed travel agents in Hong Kong are required to register with the TIA Mainland inbound tour groups they receive. From January to November 15, 2023, the monthly number of Mainland inbound tour groups is tabulated below. The relevant information is updated monthly on the TIA's website:

Month	Number of Mainland inbound tour groups (based on the registration date)
January	3
February	624
March	4 126
April	4 696
May	3 901
June	3 090
July	4 212
August	4 482
September	4 482
October	6 087
November (as at 15th)	3 278
Total	38 981

The information of land control points used by Mainland inbound tour groups, places of departure and average tour fare is tabulated in Annex. The TIA has no information on the average spending of members in the relevant tour groups.

(2) All land boundary control points (BCPs) are equipped with comprehensive and advanced clearance facilities for relevant departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government to provide quality and efficient clearance services to cross-boundary passengers (including tourists of tour groups and cross-boundary students) and cross-boundary vehicles (including cross-boundary coaches, private cars and goods vehicles).

Since the resumption of normal cross-boundary traffic between Hong Kong and the Mainland in 2023, the daily average passenger trips at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Hong Kong Port, the Shenzhen Bay Control Point (SBCP) and the Heung Yuen Wai Control Point (HYWCP) are about 56 000, 59 000 and 35 000 respectively. Among which, the daily average of passenger trips at the HZMB Hong Kong Port is similar to that before the pandemic in 2019, while for SBCP it is about 56 per cent when compared to that before the pandemic.

Relevant departments will continue to enhance clearance efficiency through various means, including the upgrading of facilities at control points, and better utilisation of information technology, etc.

As at mid-November 2023, the coach facilities at the HZMB Hong Kong Port, the SBCP and the HYWCP are tabulated below:

BCPs	Type of Coach		
	Cross-boundary coaches		Domestic coaches
	Pick-up Bays	Set-down Bays	Pick-up/Set-down Bays
HZMB Hong Kong Port	Outbound: 22 Inbound: 45	Outbound: 11 Inbound: 11	Pick-up: 8 Set-down: 5
SBCP Hong Kong Port Area (Note 1)	Inbound: 43	Outbound: 20	/
HYWCP	Inbound: 19	Outbound: 13	Shared-use Pick-up/Set-down Bays: 9 (Note 2)

Note 1: The SBCP Hong Kong Port Area is defined as closed area under the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245) and only cross-boundary coaches are allowed access.

Note 2: The Government has reserved an area in the vicinity of the HYWCP for temporary parking of 30 domestic coaches where needed.

(3) There are dedicated clearance kiosks for cross-boundary coaches and different drop-off and pick-up locations for passengers taking cross-boundary coaches (including coaches for tour groups) in the HZMB Hong Kong Port, the SBCP and the HYWCP, so as to achieve traffic diversion at the three BCPs.

To address the congestion that may be caused by tour groups during long holidays or peak periods, relevant departments will make flexible deployment for operation of additional clearance counters and vehicle clearance kiosks to divert passenger and vehicular flow. More security guards are also deployed to provide crowd management support. Close liaison is maintained with the relevant Mainland authorities to closely monitor passenger flow and to implement appropriate measures whenever necessary to ensure the BCPs are operating in an orderly manner.

In view of the surge in passenger and vehicular flow during holiday periods, the Inter-departmental Joint Command Centre, composed of relevant departments including Customs and Excise Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, and the Immigration Department, etc, will be activated during the period to monitor the situation at each BCP and take contingency actions where necessary.

In addition, prior to major long holidays, the HKSAR Government will announce through press releases and social media apps the expected passenger flow during the holiday period, and encourage the public and passengers to plan their trips in advance and make good use of the BCPs with less passenger

traffic, while appealing to Mainland travellers and Hong Kong residents planning to enter or leave Hong Kong to cross the border during non-peak hours as far as possible, with a view to minimising the congestion at the land BCPs during the morning and evening peak hours in holiday periods.