

Preparation for Chinese New Year Golden Week

The Tourism Commission (TC) has joined various government departments and the tourism industry in drawing up measures to fully prepare for the upsurge of visitors from the Mainland during the coming Chinese New Year (CNY) Golden Week period. These measures include enhancing the flow of visitors at various boundary control points, increasing the capacity of transportation facilities, and stepping up promotion and information dissemination to visitors on consumer protection.

Commissioner for Tourism Ms Eva Cheng said CNY Holiday was the traditional peak travel period for Mainland tourists. "Because of our strong festive atmosphere, Hong Kong has always been a popular destination for the Mainland tourists during this period," Ms Cheng said. "The current indications are that about 500,000 visitors may arrive from the Mainland over the 10-day period (from January 27 to February 5), representing a year-on-year growth of about 10%. We estimate that more than half of them will be Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) visitors and about 16% would come in tour groups.

"With a significant increase in the number of group tour visitors, the hotel sector has indicated that the demand of hotel rooms has been strong and the bookings for medium-tariff hotels are almost full. The Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) has again reminded inbound travel agents to ensure confirmation of accommodation before taking up tour groups from the Mainland, and requested them to issue written confirmation to the Mainland tour operators stating clearly the agreed number of reserved hotel rooms.

"In addition, the TIC has also enhanced communication with the travel agents, requesting that they make appropriate arrangements on the itinerary so as to minimise the waiting time for immigration clearance and avoid overcrowding any one attraction. The travel agents should also ensure tourist guides' compliance with the relevant codes of practice," Ms Cheng said.

"To ensure the quality of visits by tour groups, we have requested the TIC to strictly enforce the guidelines on receiving and arranging shopping activities for tour groups so as to ensure consumer protection for visitors. Any cases of complaints regarding shopping and itineraries should be taken seriously and

handled promptly," she added.

The Tourism Commission encourages Mainland tourists who are planning to visit Hong Kong during the Golden Week period to consider adjusting their journey to avoid crossing the boundary at morning and evening peak hours.

"The Government will continue to adopt a series of measures that have been effective in previous peak periods. The departments are well prepared and will flexibly deploy resources according to the situation. In addition, we will maintain a close liaison with the Guangdong Provincial Tourism Administration to monitor the situation of visitor flow and the number of arrivals," she said.

"I would suggest our visitors as well as our local residents who are travelling abroad make appropriate arrangements for hotel accommodation and transportation before departure, and purchase suitable travel insurance according to their own needs. For Hong Kong residents travelling to the Mainland who are planning to join local tours organised by Mainland travel agents, they should purchase travel insurance and consider whether the insurance protection suits their own needs," she said.

The Golden Week measures cover the following areas –

- (1) Arrangements for immigration clearance at Boundary Control Points;
- (2) Arrangement of facilities;
- (3) Information dissemination;
- (4) Visitors' information service;
- (5) Consumer protection;
- (6) Protection of visitors' health
- (7) Co-ordination with Guangdong Province

Details of the measures are at Annex.

Tourism Commission
Economic Development and Labour Bureau
25 January 2006