

Cross-boundary passenger traffic estimation and arrangements for Mid-Autumn and National Day festive periods

The Immigration Department (ImmD) estimates that around 14.83 million passengers (including Hong Kong residents and visitors) will pass through Hong Kong's sea, land and air control points during the upcoming Mid-Autumn and National Day festive periods (from September 21 to 25 and from September 28 to October 7). Among them, about 76 per cent, or around 11.33 million passengers, will pass through land boundary control points. The number of inbound passengers will be at its highest on October 1 (Monday) with over 590 000 passengers arriving in Hong Kong, while the number of outbound passengers using land boundary control points will reach its peak on October 6 (Saturday) with around 456 000 passengers departing Hong Kong.

Lo Wu will be the busiest control point, and it is estimated that there will be around 3.79 million passengers, with a daily average of about 253 000 passengers, travelling via this control point during the festive period. The passenger traffic at the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, Shenzhen Bay and Lok Ma Chau control points will also be heavy, with daily average forecasts of about 157 000, 138 000 and 82 000 passengers respectively.

To cope with the anticipated heavy traffic during the festive period, the ImmD has redeployed additional staff to reinforce various control points and has minimised leave for front-line officers for flexible deployment and operation of extra clearance counters and kiosks. Additional security guards will also be deployed to provide crowd management support.

Furthermore, the ImmD, the Police, the Customs and Excise Department and the MTR Corporation Limited will set up a joint command centre at Lo Wu Control Point to make necessary arrangements. The ImmD will also establish close communication with the Mainland frontier inspection authorities. To ensure smooth passenger traffic flow, passenger conditions will be closely monitored and appropriate traffic diversion plans will be adopted when necessary.

To avoid congestion and a longer than usual waiting time for immigration clearance, the ImmD advises all land boundary passengers to plan in advance and avoid making their journeys during busy periods, and to keep track of radio and TV broadcasts on traffic conditions at the various control points. The expected busy times at boundary control points are available on the website of the ImmD at www.immd.gov.hk. Furthermore, passengers may also check the estimated waiting times of all land boundary control points at any time or place via the Immigration Mobile Application (ImmD Mobile App). They can then plan their trips effectively and save time queuing at control

points. The ImmD Mobile App 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). The links for downloading can also be found on the ImmD website, www.immd.gov.hk. In addition, information on public transport services to and from various control points is available on the Transport Department website at www.td.gov.hk.

The ImmD will upload daily passenger statistics for the above festive periods to its website at www.immd.gov.hk for public reference.

For travellers making journeys to the Mainland, the ImmD reminds them to carry their proof of identity and valid travel documents for crossing the boundary. Hong Kong residents should also check the validity of their Home Visit Permits. Non-permanent residents must carry their valid smart identity card as well as their Document of Identity for Visa Purposes or valid travel document.

Holders of the acknowledgement receipt issued due to reported loss or replacement of their Hong Kong identity cards, or children under 11 years old who hold Hong Kong identity cards, should carry a valid travel document or Re-entry Permit.

About 650 e-Channels have been installed at various control points. Hong Kong residents enrolled for the Express e-Channel should re-enrol if they have been issued with a new identity card. Furthermore, re-enrolment is required for enrolled Mainland visitors holding a booklet-type Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao who have changed their enrolment information, e.g. having renewed their exit endorsement. Eligible Mainland holders of the electronic Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (e-EEP) can enrol for the e-Channel service by using their e-EEP and undergoing the enrolment process at a traditional entry counter on their first visit to Hong Kong. Eligible Mainland visitors who have renewed their e-EEP have to go through the aforesaid enrolment process again before they can use the e-Channel.

In addition, all control points have introduced self-service departure for visitors to Hong Kong (Smart Departure) which provides greater travel convenience for visitors. The service employs facial recognition technology for identity verification, which allows eligible visitors holding electronic travel documents to perform self-service departure clearance through Smart Departure e-Channels without prior enrolment.

Hong Kong residents who require assistance while travelling outside Hong Kong may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the ImmD at (852) 1868.

Chai Wan Public Fill Barging Point reopened

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

The Civil Engineering and Development Department today (September 18) announced that the Chai Wan Public Fill Barging Point has been reopened at 1.45pm.

Chain stall director of Bonnie Vegetables and Fruit Wholesale Limited convicted for the second time due to noise annoyance caused by Tsuen Wan outlet

A vegetable chain stall operated by Bonnie Vegetables and Fruit Wholesale Limited at San Tsuen Street and a butcher's shop at Ho Pui Street in Tsuen Wan, caused noise nuisance to nearby residents by persistently using loudspeakers to play promotional recordings at front doors. They were fined a total of \$10,500 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (September 18) for contravening the Noise Control Ordinance (NCO). The director of Bonnie Vegetables and Fruit Wholesale Limited was also convicted and held criminally liable for her stores' repeated offences. She was fined \$5,000.

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that since last year, the department received complaints continuously from members of the public about the noise nuisance caused by a vegetable chain stall and a butcher's shop in the vicinity of San Tsuen Street and Ho Pui Street in Tsuen Wan. The shops persistently played promotional recordings by using loudspeakers, which adversely affected nearby residents. The EPD conducted various inspections and enforcement operations and raided the vegetable stall and the butcher's shop concerned in March and April respectively. It was found that their loudspeakers generated excessive noise and caused annoyance, and the EPD subsequently prosecuted the stalls concerned under the NCO. Separately, six outlets operated by the vegetable chain stall company concerned, which are located in Tsuen Wan, Yuen Long, Tai Po, Shau Kei Wan and Yau Ma Tei, had been convicted a total of 12 times since last September

for contravening the NCO by causing noise nuisance to nearby residents with their loudspeakers persistently playing promotional recordings. Their director was also convicted for the second time on a similar case.

After a series of enforcement actions, the situation of the aforementioned stalls improved. The EPD is highly concerned about the noise nuisance caused by chain stalls in various districts. The department will continue to closely monitor and conduct stringent enforcement action to combat repeated contraventions by these stalls and consider prosecuting the responsible person of the operating company.

The spokesman reminded persons responsible for retail shops and market stalls that when they play promotional recordings to sell goods, they should contain the noise level within their shop area and should not cause annoyance to other people outside their shops or nearby residents. Otherwise, it constitutes an offence, and offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000. For stores with repeated contraventions, the operator himself will also be criminally liable for the offence once convicted.

Immigration policy on entry of dependants revised

The Government announced today (September 18) that the immigration policy on applications for entry of non-local dependants(Policy) has been revised so that with effect from September 19, 2018, a person who has entered into a same-sex civil partnership, same-sex civil union, "same-sex marriage", opposite-sex civil partnership or opposite-sex civil union outside Hong Kong with an eligible sponsor in accordance with the local law in force of the place of celebration and with such status being legally and officially recognised by the local authorities of the place of celebration will become eligible to apply for a dependant visa/ entry permit for entry into Hong Kong. Apart from the above, all other original eligibility criteria of the Policy remain unchanged.

A spokesman for the Government said that the Government decided to revise the Policy upon the completion of a review of the Policy conducted in view of the judgment handed down by the Court of Final Appeal (CFA) on July 4, 2018 in QT v Director of Immigration (FACV No. 1 of 2018) (QT case), having careful regard to the objective of the Policy and the principles laid down in the judgment.

Under the revised Policy, the Director of Immigration (Director) will favourably consider an application from a person who is the other party to one of the above relationships for entry for residence as a dependant in Hong Kong if the person meets the normal immigration requirements and the

following original specific eligibility criteria of the Policy:

- (i) there is reasonable proof of a genuine relationship between the applicant and the sponsor;
- (ii) there is no known record to the detriment of the applicant; and
- (iii) the sponsor is able to support the dependant's living at a standard well above the subsistence level and provide him/her with suitable accommodation in Hong Kong.

The Immigration Department (ImmD) will process outstanding applications and any new application received according to the revised Policy. As for persons who have earlier been granted permission to remain in Hong Kong by the Director under the interim arrangement put in place by the ImmD pending the completion of the review of the Policy, the permission will remain valid. Before the expiry of the permitted limit of stay, they may apply to the ImmD for extension of stay to remain in Hong Kong as dependants. The ImmD will process the applications according to the revised Policy.

The spokesman stressed that the revision concerns the immigration policy on applications for entry of non-local dependants only and it does not affect the meaning of "spouse" under this Policy. It does not affect any other policies of the Government or any other rights under the existing law in Hong Kong.

"As the CFA recognised in its judgment in the QT case, a valid marriage under Hong Kong law is heterosexual and monogamous and is not a status open to couples of the same sex. The revision has nothing to do with legal recognition of same-sex civil partnership, same-sex civil union, 'same-sex marriage', opposite-sex civil partnership or opposite-sex civil union in Hong Kong. Nor should there be any expectation of such plan by the Government. The revision does not compromise the Government's position in any legal proceedings," he said.

The Policy allows those who are able to provide care and financial support to their dependants to sponsor their non-local dependants to come to reside in Hong Kong. The Policy also ensures that Hong Kong will continue to attract and retain people with the right talent and skills to come to and remain in Hong Kong by giving them the choice of bringing in their non-local dependants to live with them in Hong Kong.

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting (with

video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (September 18):

Reporter: Your decision not to make yesterday as a holiday has made many citizens suffer or even get injured on their way to work, and legally, people said you have mechanism to make yesterday as a holiday, like General Holidays Ordinance or the Emergency Regulations Ordinance. So, will you apologise for not making yesterday as a holiday as people have criticised on your Facebook that you have put their life at risk?

Chief Executive: I don't think the Government has put any citizen's life at risk. We have done all we could to respond to this super typhoon, and afterwards we have been trying very hard to restore the city to normal as quickly as possible. But, as I have said in my introductory remarks, the magnitude of this typhoon was huge and the impact was very serious, so the disruptions to public transport, especially the East Rail and the franchised bus services are very serious. We have made repeated, I have personally made repeated appeals to employers that this is the sort of situation that we need more understanding, accommodation and mutual support. So, for individuals who have difficulties in going back to work because of the traffic disruptions, the employers should express understanding, and as I have said, yesterday I received feedback from many employer associations and sector representatives that they are exercising that flexibility in order to accommodate the difficulties faced by the employees in travelling to work. Having said that, every time we have a major incident, we will review the arrangements, so I have asked the Secretary for Security to conduct an overall review of the various arrangements in coping with major typhoon like this one.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)