

Cross-boundary passenger traffic estimation and arrangements for Lunar New Year festive period

The Immigration Department (ImmD) estimates that over 7.5 million passengers (including Hong Kong residents and visitors) will pass through Hong Kong's sea, land and air control points during the upcoming Lunar New Year festive period (from February 9 to 17). The ImmD, in consultation with the Shenzhen General Station of Exit and Entry Frontier Inspection, estimates that around 6 million passengers will pass through land boundary control points. The number of outbound passengers and inbound passengers using land boundary control points will be relatively higher on February 11 (Sunday) and February 13 (Tuesday), with around 461 000 passengers and 607 000 passengers respectively.

The ImmD estimates that the passenger traffic at Lo Wu Control Point, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Point will be heavy, with a daily average forecast of about 170 000, 158 000 and 105 000 passengers respectively.

To facilitate diversion of cross-boundary passenger and vehicular movements during the Lunar New Year holidays, a consensus was reached by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government with the relevant departments of Guangdong Province and Shenzhen Municipality to make the following special arrangements:

(1) Passenger and passenger vehicle clearance services at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point, which usually close at midnight, will operate overnight, providing round-the-clock services, from February 9 to 13; and

(2) Passenger clearance service at the Lo Wu Control Point, which usually closes at midnight, will be extended on February 9 and 11 to 2am the next day.

With the extension of operating hours at certain land boundary control points, and to cope with the anticipated heavy traffic during the festive period, the ImmD has minimised leave for frontline 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 authorities, such as the Shenzhen General Station of Exit and Entry Frontier Inspection. 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, avoid making their journeys during busy periods and keep track of radio and TV broadcasts on traffic conditions at 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 at each land boundary control point 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 11.0 or above), Google Play (supports Android version 8.0 or above), Huawei AppGallery (supports Android version 8.0 or above) and the APK file available on the ImmD website. Passengers can download the ImmD Mobile App by scanning the QR code (see Annex) or via 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.

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 700 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, the Contactless e-Channel service is available at all control points now. All eligible Hong Kong residents, after enrolment, can generate an encrypted QR code through the Contactless e-Channel mobile application to enter the e-Channel, and then verify their identity with the facial verification technology for automated immigration clearance.

In addition, all control points have introduced self-service departures 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.