

For information

House Committee of the Legislative Council
Extension of Opening Hours at Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau Control Points

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the extension of opening hours at Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau Control Points.

Background

2. Owing to the development of closer economic links between Hong Kong and Guangdong Province, passenger and cargo flows have been growing in recent years. As such there have been calls from the community and the freight industry for improvement in facilities and extension of operating hours at our boundary crossing points.

3. At the fourth meeting of the Hong Kong-Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference held in Hong Kong on 25 July 2001, it was agreed that to ease congestion at Lo Wu, the operating hours of Lo Wu Control Point should be extended for 30 minutes to midnight on the day before and during the day of Hong Kong Public Holidays. For Chinese New Year, the extension would cover 10 days before and during the New Year period. Both sides also agreed to further consider extending the above arrangements to weekends and other periods at Lo Wu by phases, and extending the operating hours at Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point for passenger clearance in line with Lo Wu.

4. On 26 October, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSARG) held a meeting with Mr. Chen Zuo'er, Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, and officials of the Central Government and Guangdong Province in Shenzhen to explore the possibility of extending further the operating hours at the Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau Control Points for both passenger and cargo clearance. With the concerted efforts of the HKSARG and Guangdong Provincial Government, and the support of the Central Government, both sides agreed to implement three measures to facilitate people and cargo flows between Hong Kong and Guangdong.

Improvement Measures

5. The following improvement measures will come into operation with effect from 1 December 2001. Detailed arrangements are at Annex:

- (1) to extend the operating hours of Lo Wu for passenger clearance from 06:30 - 23:30 to 06:30 - 24:00 daily;
- (2) to extend the operating hours of Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point for passenger and private car clearance to 06:30 - 24:00 daily, to tie in with the operating hours of Lo Wu; and
- (3) three more Hong Kong-bound lanes and one more Mainland-bound lane will be opened for cargo clearance at Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point between 22:00 and 24:00 every night.

6. To tie in with the extension of opening hours at Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau, the Government is working out the supporting transport facilities with the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation and other transportation operators concerned. It is anticipated that the railway, the Lok Ma Chau cross-boundary shuttle buses as well as the feeder franchised buses and green minibuses would extend their service hours in accordance with the extension of operation at boundary crossings.

Benefits

Passenger flow

7. Further extension of the opening hours at Lo Wu Control Point to midnight and the alignment of the opening hours at Lok Ma Chau/ Huanggang Control Point with those of Lo Wu were considered by both governments as an appropriate arrangement at the present stage. When deciding on the arrangement, the two governments have given full consideration to various factors such as the actual needs of cross-boundary passengers, the interests of Hong Kong and Mainland residents as well as the use of resources, with an aim to striking a proper balance.

8. From now on, passengers can cross the boundary control points at Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau before midnight on any day. It is believed that such arrangement will bring more convenience to the public. The two-and-a-half-hour extension of the operating hours at Lok Ma Chau for passenger traffic, particularly the advancing of the opening hours to 06:30, will further facilitate

(English Translation)

daily commuters travelling between Hong Kong and Shenzhen as well as cross-boundary visitors (including those using private cars). We will also flexibly deploy the resources at Lok Ma Chau Control Point to handle immigration and customs clearance for passenger and goods vehicles in light of actual needs.

9. The passenger throughput at these two busiest control points accounts for more than 90% of the total cross-boundary passenger traffic. We believe the extension of operating hours at these control points to midnight would generally be able to meet the present needs for leisure and business travelling.

Cargo flow

10. In response to requests from the freight industry, additional cargo clearance lanes will be opened from 22:00 to 24:00. Freight operators estimate that quite a number of goods vehicles cannot cross the Boundary Control Points before 10 pm. The new arrangement will further enhance the clearance capacity for goods vehicles at Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point, help shorten the queuing time of the goods vehicles at Huanggang at night and provide a more flexible transportation arrangement for cargo owners. We will publicize the additional cargo lane arrangement for night time traffic to encourage the use of the cross-boundary facilities at night. This will help ease the cargo flow in the daytime.

11. The above measures, together with the existing round-the-clock operation of one lane each for inbound and outbound cargo clearance (for use by both laden and unladen vehicles) will enhance the cargo clearance capacity of the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point. It will also allow greater flexibility for vehicles which have completed customs declarations procedures in advance to pass through the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point any time of the day.

12. From the business point of view, cross-boundary freight unrestricted by operating hours is vital to the success of Hong Kong's outward processing industry. In fact, there have been strong calls from the business sector for improved efficiency of cargo clearance at boundary crossing points during night-time to enhance the flow of cross-boundary freight. This will help lower the operating cost of the freight industry, and also sharpen the competitive edge of Hong Kong as an international and regional logistic hub.

**Hong Kong Guangdong Cooperation Coordination Unit
November 2001**

Annex

Please refer to the following table for the current services and facilities at Hong Kong's land boundary control points and the new arrangements commencing 1 December 2001 :

Control Point	Current Service Hours	Service Hours Commencing 1 December 2001	Facilities
Lo Wu	For Passengers 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. (The service hours will be extended to 12:00 midnight on Public Holidays and the day before and for a period of ten days around Lunar New Year)	For Passengers 6:30 a.m. to 12:00 midnight	<u>No. of Immigration Passenger Clearance Counters :</u> Departure - 76 (could be increased to 116 by making use of arrival counters) Arrival - 134 (could be increased to 146 by making use of departure counters)
Lo Ma Chau	<u>For Passengers and Passenger Vehicles</u> 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. <u>For Good Vehicles</u> 24 hours	<u>For Passengers and Passenger Vehicles</u> 6:30 a.m. to 12:00 midnight <u>For Good Vehicles</u> 24 hours	<u>No. of Immigration Passenger Clearance Counters :</u> Total 28 for arrival and departure clearance (the counters will be suitably apportioned according to needs) <u>Total No. of Vehicle Lanes :</u> 24, plus 2 for coaches <u>No. of Lanes for Passenger Vehicles :</u> <u>Current :</u> 2 for each arrival and departure clearance (the number of lanes will be suitably increased if the situation so warrants), shared use with goods vehicles. In addition, there is 1 lane on each direction for coaches. <u>Commencing 1 December 2001 :</u> 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. - similar to the current arrangement. 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. & 10:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight - 1 for each arrival and departure.

Control Point	Current Service Hours	Service Hours Commencing 1 December 2001	Facilities
			<p><u>No. of Lanes for Goods Vehicles:</u></p> <p><u>Current:</u> 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. - 12 for each departure and arrival*</p> <p>10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. - 1 for each departure and arrival (Customs at Huanggang, Shenzhen also opens 1 lane for each departure and arrival)</p> <p><u>Commencing 1 December 2001:</u> 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. - similar to the current arrangement.</p> <p>10:00 pm to 12:00 midnight - 2 for departure and 4 for arrival (Customs at Huanggang, Shenzhen will open 2 lanes for arrival and 4 lanes for departure)</p> <p>12:00 midnight to 7:00 a.m. - 1 for each departure and arrival (Customs at Huanggang, Shenzhen also opens 1 lane for each departure and arrival)</p> <p>* 2 lanes for shared use with passenger vehicles. A few lanes are under renovation.</p>
Ma Kam To	For Passengers and Vehicles 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.	<u>For Passengers and Vehicles</u> 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.	<u>No. of Immigration Passenger Clearance Counters :</u> 28 for both arrival and departure clearance (the counters will be suitably apportioned according to needs)

Control Point	Current Service Hours	Service Hours Commencing 1 December 2001	Facilities
			<p>Total No. of Vehicle Lanes 6 for each arrival and departure clearance (3 departure and 2 arrival lanes will be share-used by goods vehicles and passenger vehicles, the rest will be used by goods vehicles), plus 1 lane for coaches on each direction.</p>
Sha Tau Kok	For Passengers and Vehicles 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	<u>For Passenger and Vehicles</u> 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	<p><u>No. of Immigration Passenger Clearance Counters :</u> 16 for both arrival and departure clearance (the counters will be suitably apportioned according to needs)</p> <p>No. of Vehicle Lanes 3 lanes for each arrival and departure clearance. In addition, 1 lane for coach passage on each direction.</p>