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商務及經濟發展局 旅遊事務署



Tourism Commission  
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau  
22/F West Wing,  
Central Government Offices,  
2 Tim Mei Avenue,  
Tamar, Hong Kong

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**By fax and email**

28 July 2015

Ms Debbie YAU  
Clerk to Panel  
Panel on Economic Development  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex,  
1 Legislative Council Road,  
Central, Hong Kong.  
(Fax No.: 3151 7052)

Dear Ms Yau,

**Panel on Economic Development**

**Letter from Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan on review of  
the existing mechanism for protection of outbound tourists**

I refer to your letter dated 15 July 2015 to the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development on the above. Our response to the letter from Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan dated 14 July 2015 to the Panel Chairman, as well as the letter of same content from Dr Hon CHIANG and Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT dated 16 July 2015 is as follows.

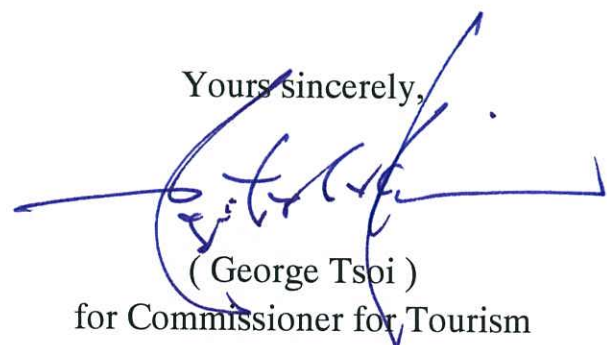
The specific content and details of the products and services provided by cruise companies are bounded by the terms and conditions stipulated on the respective sales contracts. In fact, the change of cruise itineraries due to inclement weather or other unavoidable conditions and for the safety of cruise ships and passengers is not an uncommon practice in the international cruise tourism trade. The terms and conditions as stipulated on

the sales contracts of cruise products usually provide that, for the prime consideration of upholding the safety of passengers, cruise companies and the Captains have the right to cancel or alter any pre-planned itineraries or ports of call in view of inclement weather conditions without any compensation. Passengers should have been informed of the relevant terms and conditions by the intermediaries or travel agents when they purchase the cruise products. In case passengers feel aggrieved of the arrangements of the cruise companies, their intermediaries or travel agents, they can lodge complaints through the existing channels in settling disputes between consumers and service providers, including lodging complaints to the Consumer Council. The Consumer Council would serve as a moderator and facilitate the solving of disputes between the vendors and the complainants in the course of handling the complaints. Tourists may also choose to lodge their complaints to the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong.

Cruise tourism for the mass market is a relatively new type of tourism product in Hong Kong. With cruise tourism gaining popularity amongst consumers, in order to facilitate them in understanding the major features of cruise products, and the points to note when choosing and purchasing cruise products, the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong has earlier on issued a "Guidance for booking cruise products through travel agents" (see Annex), which sets out the features of cruise products and passengers' rights, for the reference of passengers who purchase cruise products through travel agents in Hong Kong.

If you have any further enquiries, please feel free to contact the Tourism Commission anytime.

Yours sincerely,



( George Tsoi )  
for Commissioner for Tourism

Encl.



## Guidance for booking cruise products through travel agents

1. Before booking any cruise products, travellers must fully understand the respective terms and conditions, including any exemption clauses, of the cruise companies and the travel agents. During the voyage, the captain of the cruise ship may decide, on the spot, to cancel or change any pre-planned legs of the voyage or ports of call on grounds of bad weather, mechanical problems or any other force majeure causes for the safety of the cruise ship and its passengers.
2. During the journey, travellers who have questions about the services provided or run into any incidents are advised to first refer to the terms and conditions of the cruise products they have purchased, and then contact, when necessary, the cruise companies or the travel agents.
3. After returning to Hong Kong, travellers who are dissatisfied with the arrangements of the journey are advised to first refer to the terms and conditions of the cruise products they have purchased, and then contact, when necessary, the following companies or institution for assistance in following up the matters:
  - (i) the cruise companies;
  - (ii) the travel agents; or
  - (iii) the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong.

Travellers may also contact the Consumer Council for referral of the matters to the relevant companies or institution.

4. Travellers who have purchased cruise products from travel agents are covered by the Travel Industry Compensation Fund and the Package Tour Accident Contingency Fund Scheme. After payment, they should check whether the receipts are franked with the adequate levy amount.
5. When choosing travel insurance, travellers must fully understand the cover of the policy, and then take out suitable insurance to meet their own needs.

### Contact information of the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong and the Consumer Council:

#### Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong

Switchboard : 2807-1199  
 Hotline : 2969-8188  
 Website : [www.tichk.org](http://www.tichk.org)  
 Email of the Consumer Relations Department :  
[crd@tichk.org](mailto:crd@tichk.org)

#### Consumer Council

Consumer Complaint & Enquiry Hotline :  
 2929-2222  
 Website : [www.consumer.org.hk](http://www.consumer.org.hk)  
 Email : [cc@consumer.org.hk](mailto:cc@consumer.org.hk)

