Information Leaflet on
Immigration Clearance of Visiting Pleasure Vessels

The master of a visiting pleasure vessel or his/her representative should submit in advance the lists of arriving and departing crew and passengers via the Electronic Business System (eBS) not less than 24 hours prior to the vessel's arrival in and departure from Hong Kong waters. The eBS is an online platform provided by the Marine Department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. For user account registration and more information, please visit its website at https://ebs.mardep.gov.hk/en/index.php.

Upon successful submission of the crew and passenger lists, the master of the vessel or his/her representative will receive an "acknowledgement email" within 24 hours, which stipulates instructions about the immigration arrangements for the master or his/her representative to follow upon arrival or departure of the vessel, i.e. by conducting immigration clearance either at approved immigration anchorages or under special arrangements provided by the Immigration Department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

If there are any changes in the composition of crew or passengers after the list submission, the master of the vessel or his/her representative is required to resubmit the updated lists via the eBS prior to vessel's arrival in or departure from the Hong Kong waters. In case no "acknowledgement email" is received, please contact the Harbour Control Section of the Immigration Department at (852) 2534 7119 or by email to hco1@immd.gov.hk for arrangement of immigration clearance.

Immigration clearance at approved immigration anchorages

All vessels, including pleasure vessels, are required to present for immigration clearance upon arrival in and prior to departure from the Hong Kong waters. The master of a vessel has to anchor the vessel at one of the approved immigration anchorages and hoist the prescribed immigration examination signal whilst awaiting immigration examination.

Approved immigration anchorages refer to the "Eastern Immigration Anchorage" which operates from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, the "Western Immigration Anchorage" and the "Tuen Mun Immigration Anchorage", both operating round the clock. Their locations are illustrated in the "Hong Kong Harbour Facilities & Layout" issued by the Marine Department.

The immigration examination signal is, by day, the letters "HNN" shown by signal flags, and by night, three white lights in a vertical line one over the other, equally spaced at distances of not less than one metre and visible from any direction at a distance of at least one nautical mile.

Under the Immigration Ordinance, Chapter 115, Laws of Hong Kong, no person is allowed to leave or board a vessel which has arrived in Hong Kong (except a pilot or a port health officer in his/her course of duty) and nothing shall be removed from or taken or placed on board the vessel until immigration examination is completed.

Special arrangements for visiting pleasure vessels

Under the special arrangements, the master of a visiting pleasure vessel will not be required to anchor the vessel at an approved immigration anchorage for immigration examination, provided that the master or his/her representative, being the responsible person for the passengers and crew members on board the vessel, presents within 24 hours after the arrival of the vessel in and before the intended departure from the Hong Kong waters the required documents to the Harbour Control Section of the Immigration Department for immigration examination. The Harbour Control Section is located on 2/F, Central Government Pier, 32 Man Fai Street, Central, Hong Kong, operating round the clock.

The immigration clearance is on "boat-by-boat" basis, i.e. all documents must be presented for immigration examination in a single batch by vessel name. The master of a vessel or his/her representative should ensure the composition of crew and passengers is fixed before presenting for immigration clearance. Any change in the composition of crew and passengers after immigration clearance must be reported to the Harbour Control Section as soon as possible. Depending on circumstances, the vessel may be required to present for immigration clearance again.

Documents required for immigration examination

During immigration examination, the master of a vessel or his/her representative has to furnish the following documents:

(i) the QR code embedded in the "acknowledgement email" from the eBS; and
(ii) travel documents or Hong Kong permanent identity cards of all persons on board.

A valid Port Clearance Permit issued by the Marine Department should also be produced at the time of immigration examination for departure clearance. If the master of the vessel or his/her representative fails to produce the aforesaid QR code, he/she will be asked to fill in the crew list and passenger list (form ID 207A) in triplicate. Where necessary, the master or his/her representative may be required to furnish other supporting documents (e.g. the vessel's documents).

Visa/entry permit requirements and conditions of stay for passengers of visiting pleasure vessels

Non-local passengers who are visa-free nationals or residents of Macao may be permitted to remain in Hong Kong on visitor condition according to their respective visa-free period or entry permit-free period, subject to normal immigration requirements being met. Passengers who are visa-required nationals or residents of the Mainland or Taiwan, China are required to obtain a visit visa/exit endorsement/entry permit as appropriate before coming to Hong Kong under the existing entry arrangements.

Visa/entry permit requirements and conditions of stay for crew members of visiting pleasure vessels

Non-local crew members who are visa-free nationals or residents of Macao may be permitted to remain in Hong Kong for a period up to 90 days or until the vessel concerned departs Hong Kong, whichever is earlier, subject to the condition that they are engaged solely in the operation of the vessel concerned at all times and normal immigration requirements being met. Crew members who are visa-required nationals or residents of the Mainland or Taiwan, China are required to obtain a visit visa/exit endorsement/entry permit as appropriate before coming to Hong Kong under the existing entry arrangements. They may be permitted to remain in Hong Kong for a period specified in the visit visa/exit endorsement/entry permit or until the vessel concerned departs Hong Kong, whichever is earlier, subject to the condition that they are engaged solely in the operation of the vessel concerned at all times and normal immigration requirements being met.

For more information on visit visa and entry permit requirements for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, please visit the Immigration Department's website at www.immd.gov.hk or refer to the pamphlet "Do you need a Visa for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China?" (ID 290).

For enquiries, please contact the Information and Liaison Section of the Immigration Department at (852) 2824 6111 (Mon – Fri: 8:45 am – 5:15 pm, Sat: 9:00 am – 12:00 noon) or the Harbour Control Section at (852) 2534 7119 or by email to enquiry@immd.gov.hk.

Immigration Department
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