

# Hong Kong Information

## **Air Passenger Departure Tax & Surcharges**

All passengers of 12 years old and above departing Hong Kong International Airport must pay a HK\$120 (about USD15) Air Passenger Departure Tax which is normally included in the price of the airline ticket. Passengers departing Hong Kong International Airport need to also pay a security charge of HK\$33 (about USD4).

## **Banking**

Major banks are open from 09:00 to 16:30 Monday to Friday, and 09:00 to 12:30 on Saturdays. Some banking services are not available an hour before closing. Automated teller machines (ATMs) can be found almost everywhere and some HSBC "Electronic Money" machines provide 24-hour cash withdrawal (HK\$) facilities for Visa and MasterCard holders. American Express cardholders have access to Jetco ATMs and can withdraw Hong Kong dollars and travellers' cheques at the Express Cash ATMs.

## **Currency**

Legal tender is the Hong Kong dollar (HK\$). There are 100 cents in a dollar. Coins have values of 10 cents, 20 cents, 50 cents, HK\$1, HK\$2, HK\$5 and HK\$10. Notes have denominations of HK\$10, HK\$20, HK\$50, HK\$100, HK\$500, and HK\$1,000.

Value of the Hong Kong dollar has been pegged at HK\$7.8 to the USD1, and consequent rates of exchange to other currencies. However, the market rate exchange to the US dollar fluctuates marginally. Banks and money changers charge commission. Commissions are payable in hotels and major retail outlets which provide exchange facilities for their customers. The rates of exchange for cash and travelers' cheques are marginally different and coins are not exchangeable.

## **Telephone Services**

Most hotels provide international direct dial services. Local calls from public telephones usually cost HK\$1 for five minutes and calls can be paid by phone card or coins. Phone cards are available from retail stores of telephone companies and convenience stores and usually have values of HK\$50, and \$100. For directory enquiries, call 1081 (English) or 1083 (Chinese).

Using mobile phone in Hong Kong is convenient as most of the telephone systems like GSM 900, PCS 1800, CDMA, TDMA and W-CDMA operate in Hong Kong.

Mobile operators in Hong Kong also have roaming agreements with most overseas operators. Before leaving home check with your network provider to make sure they have a roaming service in Hong Kong and be sure to check pricing.

You may rent a mobile phone when you arrive in Hong Kong at the international airport. To make an international call in Hong Kong you must dial 001.

### **Electricity / Computer hook up**

The standard electrical voltage in HK is 220 volts AC, 50HZ, so you will need an adaptor for your 100-volt appliances and electrical equipment. The majority of electrical outlets in Hong Kong take a three-pronged plug. ***Delegate please be reminded to bring your own adaptor to use throughout the meeting.***

For internet access, you will need a RJ type plug to connect your laptop into a computer socket.

### **Mass Transit Railway (MTR)**

MTR operates from about 06:00 to 01:00 and connects major parts of Hong Kong with clean, fast and reliable service along six inter-connected lines. It also provides commuter train service in the New Territories to the boundary with China, and long-distance rail into China.

### **Taxi**

Taxis are red in urban areas, green in the New Territories and blue on Lantau Island. Flag falls respectively are HK\$15, HK\$12.50 and HK\$12 for the first 2km. After that, it is HK\$1.40, HK\$1.20 and HK\$1.20 respectively for each 0.2km. Among the extra charges are tunnel and bridge tolls and a luggage handling fee. Complete fare details are listed on yellow stickers inside every taxi. Receipts are available upon request and it is advisable to always ask for one in case you lose your belongings and need to contact the taxi driver. Please note that by law, passengers are required to wear seat belts. Hailing a taxi on the street is easy but they are not allowed to stop at double yellow lines.

### **Octopus Card**

Octopus card allows you to pay almost all public transport fare (such as MTR) electronically. A new Octopus card includes a refundable HK\$50 deposit. Any leftover money is also refunded when you return the card (minus a HK\$7 handling fee for cards issued less than three months). The cards are available at MTR and KCR customer service centres.

### **Tipping and Service Charges**

Most restaurants will levy a 10 per cent service charge but waiters will expect to be given some loose change. However, tipping is left to your discretion.

## **Health and Hygiene**

Upon arrival, you will have your temperature taken when you pass through immigration. These measures enable visitors to have an enjoyable and healthy stay in Hong Kong.

Visitors are required to pay HK\$570 (about USD73) if they use the Accident and Emergency services in Hong Kong public hospitals. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region assures visitors they will receive the emergency care they require. People who cannot pay immediately will be billed later. Vaccination certificates are usually not required. Check with your local carriers because requirements can change.

Hong Kong has strict laws to maintain environmental hygiene, including fixed penalty fines of HK\$1,500 for littering or spitting.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited in most enclosed public places, including restaurants, karaokes, malls and some bars as well as some outdoor areas (public beaches and swimming pools, transport interchanges and outside escalators, etc).

July and August are the summer season in Hong Kong. The weather is hot and humid. Temperatures range from 26°C to 33°C, humidity near 86%.

## **Languages**

The official languages are Chinese and English, with Cantonese the most widely spoken Chinese dialect. Use of Putonghua is growing. All major signage is in English or is bilingual. Most people in the service industries speak English and Putonghua.

## **Events to be held in July/August**

Please check out the following web site for information

<http://www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/showtime/whaton/index.jhtml>