

Health Advice for Tour Leaders and Tour Guides

Operating Tours in Hong Kong

Preventing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)



Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a respiratory tract infection which is spread by respiratory droplets and caused by a coronavirus. While the World Health Organization has removed Hong Kong from its list of areas with recent local transmission, Hong Kong remains vigilant and puts in place stringent measures to protect public health. These measures serve to enable visitors to have an enjoyable and healthy stay in Hong Kong. To safeguard your health and the health of others, please pay attention to the following health guidelines formulated by the Department of Health.

Tour leaders and tour guides are key persons in the reception of tourists. They provide the best of services to make tourists feel at home and take care of their health during the trip. A tour leader or tour guide should therefore cease reception of tourists if he/she experiences the following:

1. Feeling unwell, especially having a fever; or
2. Having been in close contact with suspected or confirmed SARS patients during the last 10 days. (Close contact means having cared for, having lived with, or having had contact with the respiratory secretions or bodily fluids of an infected person.)

Before the Trip

- Browse the World Health Organization's website at <http://www.who.int> to confirm whether tourists to be received are coming from an area with recent local transmission of SARS.

- If tourists to be received are coming from an area with recent local transmission of SARS, advise them to bring a thermometer for daily body temperature checking.
- Request tourists to study the Health Advice for Visitors to Hong Kong before the trip.
- Prepare the following:
 - A list of registered medical practitioners in Hong Kong and the addresses of hospitals with accident and emergency services;
 - Some useful items such as tissue paper, masks, thermometers and vomit bags for tourists' use when necessary;
 - A disinfectant containing 65 – 95% alcohol for hand cleaning and disinfection when hand washing facilities are not available;
 - Telephone numbers of tourists' family members.

During the Trip

Restaurants

- Patronize reputable and hygienic restaurants which provide liquid soap and hand washing facilities.
- Request for serving chopsticks and spoons.

Health Advice for Tour Leaders and Tour Guides

Operating Tours in Hong Kong

Preventing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)



The Tour Coach

- Arrange an appropriate coach for the size of the group to avoid overcrowding inside the coach.
- The driver should clean the interior of the coach every day before and after carrying tourists.
 - For general purposes, cleanse with a 1:99 diluted household bleach solution.
 - If the interior is contaminated with bodily secretions, e.g. vomitus, disinfect with a 1:49 diluted household bleach solution.
- Inspect the air conditioning system frequently to ensure good ventilation.
- Make vomit bags and tissue paper available for tourists' use.

Health Advice for Tourists

- Request tourists to cooperate with port health authorities and comply with all necessary immigration procedures and health checks, including completion of health declaration forms and compliance with body temperature checking.
- For tourists from an area with recent local transmission of SARS:
 - Assist them to check body temperature every day throughout the trip.
 - If body temperature is 37.5°C (99.5°F) or above or if there is any discomfort, they should inform the tour leader and tour guide immediately.

- Remind tourists to observe good personal hygiene and environmental hygiene:
 - Put rubbish in a rubbish bin. Use a tissue paper to hold their spit and discard it into a bin with a lid. Littering or spitting in public is an offence. The offender is liable to a fixed penalty of HK\$1,500.
 - Keep hands clean at all times. Wash hands with liquid soap after going to the toilet or touching public installations or equipment, and before meals or handling food. Avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth. If necessary, wash hands before touching them. If hand washing facilities are not available, clean hands with a disinfectant containing alcohol.
 - Have tissue paper handy and cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper or a handkerchief when sneezing or coughing.
 - Have masks handy and put one on when the tourists themselves or fellow travellers feeling unwell with symptoms of respiratory tract infection.
 - To prevent spread of infection, do not share towels or personal items.
 - Use serving chopsticks and spoons at meal times. Do not share lunch boxes or drinks.
 - Maintain healthy lifestyle practices throughout the trip. Observe good personal hygiene and do not smoke.

Health Advice for Tour Leaders and Tour Guides

Operating Tours in Hong Kong

Preventing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)



- Remind tourists to watch out for changes in health condition after the trip. If they develop symptoms of an infection such as fever and diarrhoea within 14 days after the trip, they should consult the doctor promptly and provide details of their recent travel to ensure accurate diagnosis.
- Provide the following information to tourists for use in case of discomfort or emergency:
 - The name, room number and telephone number of the tour leader/tour guide;
 - Telephone number of the hotel's reception desk.

If a Tourist Feels Unwell

- The tour leader/tour guide should assist the sick tourist in body temperature checking.
- If body temperature of the sick tourist is 37.5°C (99.5°F) or above:
 - The sick tourist and his/her carers should put on a mask immediately;
 - Arrange for medical treatment at once.
- Seek medical advice on whether the sick tourist could continue travelling with other members of the group.
- If the sick tourist does not have a fever but has other discomforts, it is still necessary to arrange for treatment by a registered medical practitioner.

- If the sick tourist is suspected to have SARS and is required to be hospitalized for investigation, the tour leader/tour guide should immediately call the Department of Health's hotline at 187 2222.

After the Trip

- Keep personal information and telephone numbers of tourists in your group for at least 2 weeks.

Health Information for Travellers

- For health information for travellers, please call the Department of Health's Travel Health Centre at 2961 8840 or 2150 7235, or visit the Department of Health's Hong Kong Traveller's Health Service website at <http://www.info.gov.hk/trhealth>.
- For information on SARS, please call the Department of Health's SARS hotline at 187 2222 or visit the Department's website at <http://www.dh.gov.hk>.

9 July 2003