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**RE: Re: Fingerprint scanning no longer necessary**

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**From** enquiry@immd.gov.hk <enquiry@immd.gov.hk>

**Date** Mon 21/10/2024 17:25

**To** Simon H WANG <simonwang@hkbu.edu.hk>

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**Our ref. : IL/00697873/24**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your e-mail message.

Please find our Department's reply on your suggestions below:

*Reviewing data about the usage of contactless e-Channel especially the fingerprint scanners (please advise if such data is available)*

As at 30.9.2024, there were around 119 million movements recorded in using the Contactless e-Channel. The usage statistic of fingerprint scanners was not available.

*Removing the fingerprint scanners to avoid confusion*

The installation of the fingerprint scanners are essential for our flexible deployment of various types of e-Channel services to cater for eligible Hong Kong residents or visitors, including those who are required to undergo fingerprint verification. Meanwhile, the “Contactless e-Channel” Service is an optional service. If passengers choose not to enrol for the “Contactless e-Channel” Service, they can still perform self-service immigration clearance by fingerprint verification. Besides, if facial verification is unsuccessful when using the “Contactless e-Channel” Service, enrolled Hong Kong resident is still required to verify the identity through fingerprints. Therefore, retention of the fingerprint scanner in e-Channel is necessary.

*Promoting the contactless features among eligible HK residents*

As to the publicity of Contactless e-Channel service, apart from our Department's YouTube Channel, advertisement has also been placed at various media platforms such as TV, radio broadcast and newspaper.

*Extending the services/feature to non-HK residents (if not yet available to them)*

Currently, the “Contactless e-Channel” Service is for eligible Hong Kong residents only. To cope with the ever-changing environment, ImMD has been actively exploring various advanced technologies for delivering efficient and quality services to the public. As regards your suggestion of extending the “Contactless e-Channel” Service to non-Hong Kong residents, we will actively study its feasibility so as to enhance the immigration services for passengers.

Thank you for bringing the matters to our attention.

Regards,  
SIU Yee-mei  
for Director of Immigration

To learn more about the services and activities of the Immigration Department, you are welcome to visit and follow the Immigration Department's social media platforms.



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<-- Start of Original Message -->

**From Name :** Simon H WANG

**From Address :** simonwang@hkbu.edu.hk

**To :** enquiry@immd.gov.hk;

**CC :**

**Subject :** Re: Fingerprint scanning no longer necessary

**Receive Time :** 11/10/2024 14:36:10

**Body :**

Dear Sir/Madam

With all due respect, I don't think your team addressed the issues I raised. And I found it rather unprofessional for your team to reply to my email without referring to (or even including) my original message. Did you do this on purpose to make it more difficult for me to follow up on this case?

Grateful if a senior staff member can review and respond to the following suggestions I made- it should be pretty clear to your team how your services can be improved. Do you really need me to spell out? If a HK resident is eligible for skipping fingerprint scan, s/he should be fully informed about it. It would be a shame if many HK residents should have enjoyed the convenience but did not because of the lack of information or promotion. Does your team really care about the quality of the services?

- Reviewing data about the usage of contactless e-Channel especially the fingerprint scanners (please advise if such data is available)
- Removing the fingerprint scanners to avoid confusion
- Promoting the contactless features among eligible HK residents
- Extending the services/ feature to non-HK residents (if not yet available to them)

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Yours sincerely  
Simon Wang

Thanks for your reply.

It is good to know that "Contactless e-Channel" Services are available through which passengers can skip the finger scan. Yet, I am concerned that not many HK residents are aware of this function. They still put their fingers on the scanners when they do not have to do so.

Also there are channels designated for visitors- but the contactless feature is also available in those channels. Can you clarify if visitors can also skip the fingerprint scan?

Overall I think the department should consider

- Reviewing data about the usage of contactless e-Channel especially the fingerprint scanners (please advise if such data is available)
- Removing the fingerprint scanners to avoid confusion
- Promoting the contactless features among eligible HK residents
- Extending the services/ feature to non-HK residents (if not yet available to them)

Yours sincerely  
Simon Wang

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**From:** enquiry@immd.gov.hk <enquiry@immd.gov.hk>  
**Sent:** 09 October 2024 10:36  
**To:** Simon H WANG <simonwang@hkbu.edu.hk>  
**Subject:** Re: Fingerprint scanning no longer necessary

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**Our ref. : IL/00676200/24**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your e-mail message.

Contactless e-Channel” employs face verification technology for identity verification, which facilitates contactless clearance without presenting identity cards nor having the fingerprint scanned. Eligible Hong Kong residents aged 11 or above may choose to enrol in this service for free. Enrolled Hong Kong residents may then use their Hong Kong smart identity cards or the QR code generated on their smart phones for self-service immigration clearance using their facial images. The “Contactless e-Channel” Service is an optional service. If you choose not to enrol for the “Contactless e-Channel” Service, you can still perform self-service immigration clearance by fingerprint verification.

Meanwhile, visitors eligible for e-Channel service, in general, are required to undergo fingerprint verification when using e-Channel.

The self-service departure for visitors to Hong Kong ("Smart Departure") has been launched since October 2017. Smart Departure employs face recognition technology for identity verification, which facilitates self-service departure for visitors. Visitors aged 11 or above who hold valid electronic travel documents compliant with the International Civil Aviation Organization's requirements, and issued by designated countries or regions as announced by the ImmD, may perform self-service departure clearance through Smart Departure e-Channels at control points without prior enrolment. In other words, a departing visitor using Smart Departure e-Channel is not required to undergo fingerprint verification.

Currently, the Immigration Department has more than 700 multi-purpose e-channels at various control points, which can be flexibly deployed for use by eligible Hong Kong residents or visitors. Staff at control points will closely monitor passenger traffic and flexibly deploy various types of e-Channel services in order to shorten passengers' waiting time.

As to the publicity of Contactless e-Channel service, apart from our Department's Youtube Channel, advertisement has also been placed at various media platforms such as TV, radio broadcast and newspaper.

Thank you for bringing the matters to our attention.

Regards,  
SIU Yee-mei  
for Director of Immigration

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