



Hong Kong

HONG KONG

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Hong Kong offers a dense concentration of shops and shopping malls with a cross-pollinated cosmopolitan culture that embraces Nepalese and British cuisines with equal enthusiasm. It is the perfect gateway for travellers to Southeast Asia and China, providing a smooth transition from west to east. As one of the key economies of the Pacific Rim, Hong Kong Island showcases a gleaming landscape of skyscrapers and boasts a highly developed transport infrastructure that makes commuting around it a dream.

Hong Kong consists of four sections: Kowloon, Hong Kong Island, the New Territories and the Outlying Islands. Kowloon and the New Territories form part of the Chinese mainland to the north of Victoria Harbour. Hong Kong Island, containing the central business hub, lies on the southern side of the harbour facing Kowloon. The Outlying Islands comprise a composite of 234 islands.



Hong Kong from Kowloon © Hong Kong Tourist Board

Basics

Time: Local time is GMT +8.

Electricity: Electrical current is 220 volts, 50Hz. The UK-style 3-pin plugs are standard.

Money: The unit of currency is the Hong Kong dollar (HKD); HK\$1 is divided into 100 cents. Major banks are open from 9am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 12:30pm on Saturday. Banks and moneychangers charge commission as do hotels that provide exchange services. All major credit cards are accepted and ATMs are widely distributed. Some HSBC 'Electronic Money' machines provide 24-hour cash withdrawal facilities for Visa and MasterCard holders.

Currency Exchange Rates				
HKD1.00	HKD5.00	HKD10.00	HKD100.00	HKD1,000.00
A\$ 0.17	A\$ 0.85	A\$ 1.69	A\$ 16.90	A\$ 169.03
C\$ 0.14	C\$ 0.72	C\$ 1.45	C\$ 14.45	C\$ 144.53
€ 0.09	€ 0.46	€ 0.93	€ 9.27	€ 92.71
NZ\$ 0.21	NZ\$ 1.04	NZ\$ 2.07	NZ\$ 20.74	NZ\$ 207.37
R 1.05	R 5.26	R 10.52	R 105.20	R 1,051.97
£ 0.08	£ 0.40	£ 0.81	£ 8.09	£ 80.90
US\$ 0.13	US\$ 0.64	US\$ 1.29	US\$ 12.90	US\$ 128.99

Note: These rates are not updated daily and should be used as a guideline only.

Language: The official languages in Hong Kong are English and Cantonese. The other main language is Mandarin.

Entry requirements for Americans: United States citizens must have a valid passport, but no visa is required for a stay of up to three months.

Entry requirements for UK nationals: British citizens must have a valid passport for their period of intended stay, but no visa is required for a stay of up to six months. Most other British passport holders do not require a visa for stays of up to three months.

Entry requirements for Canadians: Canadians must have a valid passport, but no visa is required for a stay of up to three months.

Entry requirements for Australians: Australians must have a valid passport, but no visa is required for a stay of up to three months.

Entry requirements for South Africans: South Africans must have a valid passport, but no visa is required for stays of up to one month.

Entry requirements for New Zealanders: New Zealand citizens must have a valid passport, but no visa is required for a stay of up to three months.

Entry requirements for Irish nationals: Irish nationals must have a valid passport, but no visa is required for a stay of up to three months.

Passport/Visa Note: All passports must be valid for at least one month after period of intended stay. All visitors must be in possession of onward or return tickets, except when in transit to mainland China or Macao, as well as all documents required for next destination and sufficient funds to cover their stay in Hong Kong.

Health: There are no specific health risks associated with travel to Hong Kong. Food and water are safe, although visitors should consider only drinking bottled water for the first few days of their stay. The Hepatitis E virus is transmitted through contaminated food and water and precautions should be taken with food and drink. Take precautions against mosquito bites, as there is a risk of Dengue fever. Outbreaks of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease are reported annually. Hong Kong's health facilities are first class, but expect to pay cash. Medical insurance is advised. Cases of bird flu have been reported and although the risk for travellers is low, all close contact with caged, domestic and wild birds should be avoided, and all poultry and egg dishes well cooked. High quality medical care is widely available but medical insurance is recommended.

Tipping: A 10% service charge is usually added to restaurant bills, but waiters will still expect some loose change in addition to this. If no service charge is included, a 10% tip is expected. Taxi fares are rounded up to the nearest dollar (usually automatically by the driver).

Climate: The best time to travel to Hong Kong is between the autumn months of October and November when the temperatures are milder. January and February are usually cold and rainy months while June to September temperatures average 86°F (30°C) with 95% humidity. Some rain and humidity can be expected throughout the year. Even during the height of summer it is worth bringing some warm clothing to combat the fierce air conditioning in shops and offices.

Safety: Hong Kong is a safe travel destination although caution should always be exercised when travelling to any city. Pickpockets are likely to target unsuspecting tourists so one should minimise these incidences through vigilance. Be wary of accepting drinks from strangers, as reports of spiked drinks are increasing. Robbers have recently targeted walkers in Hong Kong's Country Parks so it is advisable to stay on marked trails and not to carry large amounts of cash or credit cards. The typhoon season is usually between April and October, which may cause flooding and landslides.

Customs: Littering and spitting are illegal in Hong Kong and will incur on the spot fines. In Hong Kong the concept of 'face' is very important; avoid causing someone to 'lose face' by publicly insulting them or contradicting them in front of others as this is a general 'no no'. The Chinese have great respect for hierarchical relationships.

Business: Business in Hong Kong is conducted efficiently and formally and punctuality is important. It is advised to allow for sufficient travel time before meetings considering the high traffic congestion. Suits and ties are the norm and it is customary to exchange business cards (printed in English on one side and Cantonese on the other) at the start of a meeting, along with a handshake. Business cards should be given and received using both hands, with the Cantonese side facing the recipient, and should be treated with respect. It is common to greet the more senior or elder person first. Business entertainment is usually in the form of a lunch or dinner that is organised by the hosting partner. Food is also usually ordered and paid for by the host. It is not unusual to exchange gifts, but they are opened at the meeting. Business hours are usually from 9am to 5pm, sometimes later on weekdays and some businesses also open between 9am and 1pm on Saturdays.

Communications: The international access code for Hong Kong is +852. The outgoing code depends on what network is used: 001 for PCCW, 0080 for Hutchinson and 009 for New World. City codes within Hong Kong are not required. The local mobile phone operators use GSM networks and have roaming agreements with most international operators. Mobile phones can also be rented on arrival at the international airport. Internet cafes are widely available, and access is free at many coffee shops, shopping malls, MRT stations and public libraries in town.

Duty Free: Travellers to Hong Kong over the age of 18 years do not have to pay duty on 1 litre of spirits or wine, 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco. A reasonable amount of items for personal use is also permitted. Prohibited items include narcotics, psychotropic drugs, firearms and ammunition; counterfeit items, endangered species (alive or stuffed), and copyright infringed products.

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Hong Kong at night © das farbamt

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Attractions

Victoria Peak

Much of the pleasure derived from a trip to Victoria Peak lies in the journey to its summit. The funicular railway or peak tram has steadily made its way up the mountain since 1888. Energetic travellers can scale the real peak that extends 140m (459ft) above the tram terminus. From the top, marvellous vistas open out onto central Hong Kong and across to Kowloon. Victoria Peak used to serve as a hill station in colonial times and later became the location of exclusive summer homes. Today it is a popular tourist spot offering a cooler perspective from which to contemplate the pleasures of travel to the region. The Peak Tower on the summit houses numerous attractions, like a Ripley's Believe it or not 'Odditorium', shops and restaurants.

Telephone: 2522 0922 (Peak Tram); **Website:** www.thepeak.com.hk; **Transport:** Take the Peak Tram from Garden Road or bus 15C. There is also a shuttle bus (daily 9am to 7pm) that departs from Star Ferry Terminal; **Opening time:** The Peak Tram runs every day, including Sundays and public holidays, between 7am and midnight. The tram departs every 10-15 minutes; **Admission:** Tram fares are HK\$22 for a single and HK\$33 return (adults)

Hong Kong Disneyland

The fifth Disneyland Resort in the world, but also the smallest, Hong Kong Disneyland offers a magical adventure in four themed lands similar to other parks, namely Main Street USA, Fantasyland, Adventureland and Tomorrowland. Mickey Mouse welcomes visitors of all ages to the happiest place on Earth, which also includes attractions exclusively designed for Hong Kong. Particular care has been taken to incorporate Chinese culture into the design, such as a feng shui layout, and the omission of the number four in the numbering of floors in each of the two hotels. In addition to the numerous rides and various events and attractions, shops sell Disney souvenirs and restaurants offer a variety of food throughout the park.

Address: Lantau Island; **Website:** www.hongkongdisneyland.com; **Transport:** MTR Disneyland Resort Line; **Opening time:** Daily 10am to 8pm; **Admission:** Regular day: HK\$295 (adults), HK\$210 (children 3-11); Peak days and Special days: HK\$350 (adults), HK\$250 (children 3-11)

Western Market

This indoor market is held in a four-storey red brick colonial building that was constructed in 1906. After extensive renovation it re-opened in 1991 and now occupies an entire block at the western end of Central Hong Kong. The building houses a variety of shops and stalls that sell a range of products from curios to assorted silks and fabrics. From here one can hop onto Hong Kong's ancient double-decker tram headed for Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and Happy Valley.

Address: 323 De Voeux Road Central, Sheung Wang; **Transport:** Take the MTR to Sheung Wan, exit B or C; bus or tram along Des Voeux Road to Sheung Wan; **Opening time:** Open daily from 10am to 7pm; **Admission:** Free

Police Museum

The Police Museum showcases a display tracing the development and history of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force from 1844 to today. The main exhibit encompasses a significant number of artefacts relating to the Hong Kong Police Force from uniforms and firearms, to historical archives and photographs. Other exhibits look at the major factions which have influenced the status quo namely the triad societies and narcotics (Hong Kong was founded on the narcotics trade). The Police Museum is an interesting visit, which provides insight into the dedication of the officers who served within this elite force.

Address: 27 Coombe Road, The Peak, Hong Kong; **Telephone:** 2849 7019; **Transport:** Take NWFB Bus No.15 (from Exchange Square to the Peak). Get off at the stop between Stubbs Road and Peak Road; **Opening time:** Wednesday to Sunday 9am to 5pm; Tuesday 2pm to 5pm. Closed Mondays and public holidays; **Admission:** Free

Statue Square

This square is an amalgamation of Hong Kong's contemporary architecture that reaches its most spectacular manifestation in the designs of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and the Bank of China Tower. The most significant feature of the HSBC building is that it has been designed without a central core, a feat of structural engineering blended with the ultimate in aesthetic principles. The Bank of China Tower became a much-debated conversation piece following its construction, largely because of the asymmetrically-designed pinnacle that acquires differing perspectives depending on one's vantage point.

Transport: MTR Central station, exit K

Hong Kong Museum of History

The Hong Kong Museum of History showcases Hong Kong's archaeological, cultural and natural history through a display of cultural objects, artefacts, photographs, traditional costumes and models that span 6,000 years. Glorious period sets tell the story of Chinese life in replicas of village houses, streets and stores. These memorials to the past are contained within an incredible building opened in the year 2000.

Address: 100 Chatham Road South, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (next to the Hong Kong Science Museum);

Telephone: +852 2724 9042; **Website:** www.lcsd.gov.hk/hkmh; **Transport:** MTR Tsim Sha Tsiu, then walk via Granville Road; maxicab no 1 from Kowloon Star Ferry in Tsim Sha Tsiu to Science Museum Road; **Opening time:** Monday and Wednesday to Saturday 10am to 6pm; Sunday and public holidays 10am to 7pm. Closes at 5pm on Christmas Eve and Chinese New Year's Eve. Closed on Tuesdays and first two days of Chinese New Year;

Admission: HK\$10; concessions available. Free admission on Wednesday

Wong Tai Sin Temple

This grand Taoist temple is one of the most frequently visited temples in Hong Kong. It is dedicated to Wong Tai Sin, a legendary hermit who reputedly had healing powers and could foretell the future. A number of fortunetellers ply their trade in the temple complex and there is also a large pharmacy. The ornate temple with its red pillars, gold ceilings and decorative latticework is usually full of people burning incense and making floral offerings. The temple also has a lovely adjacent park called the 'Good Wish Gardens', a peaceful green spot with waterfalls tumbling over rocks.

Address: 2 Chuck Yuen Village, Kowloon; **Telephone:** 2327 8141; **Transport:** MTR to Wong Tai Sin, exit B;

Opening time: Daily 7am to 5.30pm, gardens closed on Mondays; **Admission:** Free (although donations are welcome)

Ocean Park and Middle Kingdom

The Ocean Park and Middle Kingdom is a theme park spread over two parts, connected to each other by a cable car. A spectacular aquarium, reputed to be the largest in world, is complemented by a funfair containing a roller coaster, space wheel, octopus and swinging ship amongst its rides. Entrance fee also includes a visit to the ancient Chinese Middle Kingdom.

Address: Ocean Park Road, Aberdeen; **Telephone:** 2552 0291; **Website:** www.oceanpark.com.hk; **Transport:** Take City Bus route 629 from either Admiralty MTR Station or Central Pier No.7. Bus fares are HK\$10.6 for adults and HK\$5.3 for children. Check out the website for other frequent public bus services; **Opening time:** Daily 10am to 6pm; **Admission:** HK\$208 (adults); HK\$103 (children 3-11); under 3 and over 65 free

Aberdeen

Some 200 years ago, Hong Kong's Aberdeen district was a haven for pirates. Located on the southern shore of Hong Kong Island, it is home to the Tanka boat people and has become a popular tourist destination where visitors can experience on hand the traditional lifestyle of boat dwellers and sample fresh seafood. Aberdeen is a lively marina crammed with junks, sampans, water taxis (kai do), cruisers and yachts. The fishing harbour is a wonderful way to experience the activity of life on water. Tours along Aberdeen's watery stretches can be enjoyed onboard one of the many sampans offering half-hour trips around the harbour and the sensory delights of Hong Kong cuisine can be experienced within the unique environment of the famous Jumbo Floating Restaurant.

Address: South District, Hong Kong Island; **Transport:** Bus No.7 or No.70 from Exchange Square in Central

Lantau

Lantau is the largest of the 235 outlying islands in Hong Kong, being almost twice the size of Hong Kong Island. It is better known for its walking trails and beaches and provides a pleasant respite from crowds and shopping. The main arrival point to the island by ferry is at Mui Wo (Silvermine Bay). The finest beaches are located along the west coast, most notably Cheung Sha. Besides beaches, Western Lantau is the location of the Po Lin Monastery, the largest temple in Hong Kong. Beyond the doorstep of this vast temple is the world's largest outdoor Buddha. Aptly named Tian Tan Buddha (Big Buddha), the bronze statue sits contemplatively from the reaches of Ngong Ping Plateau. From the monastery buses will transport one to the quaint fishing village of Tai O. Here little wooden houses perch on stilts and much of life flows from the fishing industry that sustains it. Lantau's north shore is predominantly a farming region. The main attraction here however is the historical Tung Chung Fort, which was built in the early 19th century as part of a short-lived attempt to suppress the opium trade and defend the coastal area from pirates. Six old Qing Dynasty cannons dating back to 1832 stand on the ramparts. Development has changed the landscape of the Northeastern stretches of Lantau, known as Discovery Bay. Here upmarket housing complexes, shopping malls, yacht clubs and golf courses promise to provide the ultimate designer lifestyle at a price.

Transport: Ferry services are provided by New World First Ferry between Mui Wo and Central. Transportation time is about 30 or 50 minutes, depending on the vessel. There are also several smaller inter-island ferry services linking neighbouring islands and the mainland. One can also travel by a traditional water taxi, usually from nearby

Macau

The cultural influence of Portuguese life threaded through a Chinese framework has produced a unique landscape in Macau, fused with contrast and complexity. Here Baroque churches and colonial mansions appear from the cobbled pavements interspersed with plazas and cafes. Visitors are enticed here by the lure of gambling and the glitz of its promise. Macau's attractions are exemplified in its architectural heritage. St Paul's Cathedral is one such legacy that dates back to the early 17th century. It is an Italian-designed building perched on a hilltop that is most spectacular when illuminated against a night sky. The vantage point from the Fortaleza de Monte is a good place to reflect on the defensive role it played against Dutch assault in 1622 alongside an exploration of the museum and meteorological observatory. The classic Chinese temple of A-Ma rests at the base of Penha Hill. Its name derives from Tin Hau, Queen of Heaven, or the Honoured Mother. Myth has it that a poor girl saved the fishing vessel, on which she was travelling, from the ravages of a storm. In tribute to her this temple was built and is a place of pilgrimage for Macau's fishing community. Another temple dedicated to the power of female intervention is the Kun Iam Temple, built in honour of the Goddess of Mercy, located in the northern reaches of the peninsula. It was here in 1844 that the first trade and friendship treaty between USA and China was signed. Macau is 37 miles (60km) west of Hong Kong; ferries take around an hour to get there and leave every fifteen minutes.

Transport: Macau can be reached via a variety of ferries that dock at either the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal or the China Ferry Terminal in Hong Kong. Credit card bookings can be made by calling 2859 6596

Big Buddha

The Big Buddha, or Tian Tan Buddha, is one of the tallest outdoor seated bronze Buddha statues in the world, seated near Po Lin Monastery. It is a popular tourist destination and a major centre of Buddhism in Hong Kong. The 112-foot (34m) high statue sits on a lotus throne on top of a three-platform altar and is surrounded by eight smaller statues of gods. Inside the three floors beneath the Buddha visitors can access the Hall of the Universe, the Hall of Benevolent Merit and the Hall of Remembrance. Visitors can climb the 268 steps to reach the platform where the impressive figure is seated.

Address: Ngong Ping plateau; **Opening time:** Daily 10am to 5.45pm; **Admission:** Free. A fee of HK\$60 is charged for access to the exhibition halls below, which includes a vegetarian meal served at the monastery (11.30am to 5pm), as well as souvenir card

Ngong Ping 360

The Ngong Ping Cable Car is a spectacular four-mile (6km) ropeway that affords panoramic views over the bay and surrounding area on its 25-minute journey to the Ngong Ping Village. As visitors approach the cable car terminal on top of the plateau views will include the huge Tian Tan Buddha Statue and the Po Lin Monastery. The Ngong Ping Village is situated right next to the cable car terminal, which features attractions such as 'Walking with Buddha', the 'Monkey's Tale Theatre', and the 'Ngong Ping Teahouse', as well as an assortment of shopping and dining options. Walking with Buddha plunges visitors into a multimedia presentation that follows the life of Siddhartha Gautama (the man who became Buddha) and his path to enlightenment, while the Teahouse provides demonstrations of traditional Chinese tea ceremonies. The 'Monkey's Tale Theatre' presents a charming and comical show inspired by famous Buddhist Jataka stories that will enchant both old and young alike.

Address: Lantau Island; **Telephone:** 2109 9898; **Website:** www.np360.com.hk; **Opening time:** Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 6.30pm, Sunday 9am to 6.30pm; **Admission:** Cable car return: HK\$88 (adults), HK\$45 (children 3-11); 'Walking with Buddha', and 'Monkey's Tale Theatre': HK\$35 (adults), HK\$18 (children). Combination packages available. Prices are higher on Sundays

Hong Kong Science Museum

Four floors of exhibits cover a range of hands-on science and technology related subjects, including light, sound, motion, magnetism, electricity, robotics, virtual reality and much more. This museum is extremely popular because of its hands-on approach, allowing children and adults alike to learn through involvement. The most prominent exhibit is a 72-foot (22m) tall twin tower Energy Machine which, when activated, triggers a series of displays to produce spectacular audiovisual effects demonstrating various forms of energy.

Address: 2 Science Museum Road, Tsimshatsui East, Kowloon; **Telephone:** 2732 3232; **Website:** hk.science.museum; **Opening time:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 1pm to 9pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 9pm; **Admission:** HK\$25 (adults), HK\$12.50 (concessions). Free on Wednesdays

Airports

Hong Kong International Airport (HKG)

Location: The airport is situated 21 miles (34km) northwest of Hong Kong Island and 14 miles (23km) from Kowloon.

Time: GMT +8.

Contacts: Tel: +852 2181 8888.

Getting to the city: The Airport Express Line is a dedicated airport railway providing a fast and reliable service to and from the airport and downtown Hong Kong (HK\$100 one way). Trains depart daily, every 12 minutes, between 6am and 1am, and take around 25 minutes into Central. Free scheduled shuttle buses leave Hong Kong and Kowloon stations everyday, taking Airport Express passengers to and from major hotels plus key transport interchanges. There are nine Airbus routes that can take you to and from the airport. Fares range between HK\$14 and HK\$45. When you exit the arrivals hall, turn right for Airbuses and ordinary city buses. Luxury coaches at the airport also serve many destinations within Hong Kong; approach the Coach Station in Terminal 2 or Arrivals Hall of Terminal 1. Taxis are readily available from the taxi pick-up area in front of the arrivals hall; limousines are also available.

Car rental: Public transport in Hong Kong is excellent so car rental is not advised.

Airport Taxis: Taxis are readily available from the taxi pick-up area in front of the arrivals hall at Hong Kong International Airport and all have different colours, depending on their destination. Red taxis drive to almost every destination in Hong Kong besides Lantau Island, green taxis service the New Territories excluding those serviced by the red taxis, and blue taxis drive to places on Lantau Island. A taxi to the centre of Hong Kong costs about HK\$350 to HK\$400. Journeys involving passage over Lantau Bridge will incur a toll fare of HK\$30, payable by the passenger. Note that taxis do not have access to Discovery Bay.

Facilities: Airport facilities include banks, ATMs, bureaux de change, a post office, beauty salon, a children's play area, showers, restaurants, shops (including duty-free), disabled facilities, Internet cafes, conference and business services and tourist information desks.

Parking: Hong Kong International airport offers 2500 public parking spaces. The airport has both undercover and open-air car parks. Complimentary parking is given for parking spaces that are occupied for under a time frame of 30-minutes at car parks 1 and 4. Long-term parking is currently located at car park 2. Payment can be made with cash, Octopus cards or VISA cards.

Departure Tax: HK\$120 (over 12 years of age).

Website: www.hongkongairport.com

Hong Kong Climate and Weather

The best time to travel to Hong Kong is between the autumn months of October and November when the temperatures are milder. January and February are usually cold and rainy months while June to September temperatures average 86°F (30°C) with 95% humidity. Some rain and humidity can be expected throughout the year. Even during the height of summer it is worth bringing some warm clothing to combat the fierce air conditioning in shops and offices.

Hong Kong has a sub-tropical climate, with hot, humid summers and cool, dry winters. Winter lasts from January to March, the coldest month being February, when the temperature averages 57°F (14°C) and the city gets cooled by strong, cold winds that blow in from the north. In summer the wind blows from the south, bringing in warm, humid air and a rainy season that extends from spring through summer. Temperatures in summer climb to a maximum of around 82°F (28°C) and Typhoons are possible during both the spring and autumn months.

Tourism

Hong Kong Tourist Office: +852 2807 6543 or www.discoverhongkong.com

Hong Kong Embassies

Chinese Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 328 2500.

Chinese Embassy, London, United Kingdom: +44 (0)20 7299 4049.

Chinese Embassy, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 789 3434.

Chinese Embassy, Canberra, Australia: +61 (0)2 6273 4780.

Chinese Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 431 6500.

Chinese Embassy, Dublin, Ireland: +353 (0)1 269 1707.

Chinese Embassy, Wellington, New Zealand: +64 (0)4 472 1382.

Foreign Embassies in Hong Kong

United States Consulate-General, Hong Kong: +852 2523 9011.

British Consulate-General, Hong Kong: +852 2901 3281.

Canadian Consulate-General, Hong Kong: +852 2810 4321.

Australian Consulate-General, Hong Kong: +852 2827 8881.

South African Consulate-General, Hong Kong: +852 2577 3279.

Honorary Irish Consulate, Hong Kong: +852 2527 4897.

New Zealand Consulate-General, Hong Kong: +852 2525 5044.

Hong Kong Emergency Numbers

Emergencies: 999.

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