

China Tax Alert

Issue 20, March 2020

China temporarily suspends entry by foreign nationals

Regulation discussed in this issue:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China
National Immigration Administration
Announcement on the Temporary Suspension of Entry by Foreign Nationals Holding Valid Chinese Visas or Residence Permits

Background

In an effort to strengthen border control measures to minimise imported COVID-19 cases and contain the rapid spread of COVID-19 worldwide, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of the People's Republic of China and the National Immigration Administration (NIA) announced that, effective 00:00 March 28, 2020, foreign nationals in possession of valid Chinese visas or residence permits will be prohibited from entering China temporarily.

Key contents and updates

Who will be affected?

- Foreign nationals holding valid visa or residence permit
- Foreign nationals holding APEC Business Travel Card

Who will not be affected?

- Foreign nationals with diplomatic, official, courtesy and C visas
- Foreign nationals with visas issued after March 26, 2020 on the grounds of:
 - Engaging in necessary economic, trade, science and technology activities
 - Emergency humanitarian needs

At the same time, the following visa-exempt policies will also be suspended until further notice:

- Visa on arrival;
- 24/72/144 hour-transit visa-exemption policy;

- Hainan 30-day visa-exempt policy,
- 15-day visa-exempt policy for foreign nationals entering Shanghai port on cruise ship,
- 144-hour visa-exempt policy (for Guangdong province) for foreign nationals arriving from Hong Kong or Macao SAR on cruise ship; and
- 15-day visa-exempt policy (for Guangxi province) for foreign nationals arriving on tour groups organised by ASEAN countries.

KPMG observation

With countries around the globe implementing new border control measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, international assignment and business travel arrangements will face significant challenges over the next few months.

Organizations are advised to review implications of the following issues and seek professional assistance where necessary:

- Whether foreign employees or accompanying family members holding valid residence permit will be eligible to enter China by applying for a new visa on the grounds of the necessity to carry out economic/trade activities, or for emergency humanitarian needs?
- Are Chinese visa application centers in overseas countries still operating as normal during the pandemic?
- For those currently overseas but their China resident permits are due to expire in the near future, how to effectively prepare for new visa application to enable re-entry as soon as the border restrictions are lifted?
- Will organizations act proactively by suspending international assignments to contain the spread, and review the associated relevant risks, initiate contingency plan to minimise risks and costs?
- Measures to be considered to effectively adjust travel plans to minimise unnecessary time or financial losses?

KPMG will continue to follow policy and practice updates announced by the national and local immigration authorities, and inform our clients accordingly. Please contact a member of the KPMG Immigration Practice for practical solutions.



并肩赋能 税道渠成

Contact us

National



Murray Sarelius

People Services Leader
KPMG China
T: +852 3927 5671
E: murray.sarelius@kpmg.com

Northern Region



Vincent Pang

Tax Partner
KPMG China
T: +86 (10) 8508 7516
E: vincent.pang@kpmg.com



Sheila Zhang

Tax Director
KPMG China
T: +86 (10) 8508 7507
E: sheila.zhang@kpmg.com



Vivian Zhou

Tax Director
KPMG China
T: +86 (10) 8508 3360
E: v.zhou@kpmg.com

Eastern and Western Region



Michelle Zhou

Tax Partner
KPMG China
T: +86 (21) 2212 3458
E: michelle.b.zhou@kpmg.com



Jimmy Jiang

Tax Director
KPMG China
T: +86 (21) 2212 3459
E: jimmy.jiang@kpmg.com



Joyce Wang

Tax Director
KPMG China
T: +86 (21) 2212 3387
E: joyce.t.wang@kpmg.com



Robin Xiao

Tax Director
KPMG China
T: +86 (21) 2212 3273
E: robin.xiao@kpmg.com

Southern Region



Grace Luo

Tax Partner
KPMG China
T: +86 (20) 3813 8609
E: grace.luo@kpmg.com



Kelly Liao

Tax Partner
KPMG China
T: +86 (20) 3813 8668
E: kelly.liao@kpmg.com



Sophie Lu

Tax Director
KPMG China
T: +86 (20) 3813 8236
E: ss.lu@kpmg.com



Fiona Wu

Tax Director
KPMG China
T: +86 (20) 3813 8606
E: fiona.wu@kpmg.com

Hong Kong



Murray Sarelius

People Services Leader
KPMG China
T: +852 3927 5671
E: murray.sarelius@kpmg.com



David Siew

Tax Partner
KPMG China
T: +852 2143 8785
E: david.siew@kpmg.com



Gabriel Ho

Tax Director
KPMG China
T: +852 3927 5570
E: gabriel.ho@kpmg.com



Kate Lai

Tax Director
KPMG China
T: +852 2978 8942
E: kate.lai@kpmg.com

For any enquiries, please send to our public mailbox: taxenquiry@kpmg.com or contact our partners/directors.

Management Leaders

National Leader

 **Lewis Lu**
Head of Tax, KPMG China
+86 (21) 2212 3421
lewis.lu@kpmg.com

National Tax Markets Leader

 **Lilly Li**
Partner-in-Charge,
KPMG China
+86 (20) 3813 8999
lilly.li@kpmg.com

Regional Leaders

 **Curtis Ng**
Regional Tax Partner-in-Charge,
Northern Region
+86 (10) 8508 3208
curtis.ng@kpmg.com

 **Karmen Yeung**
Regional Tax Partner-in-Charge,
Southern Region
+852 2143 8818
karmen.yeung@kpmg.com

National Tax Operations Leader


 **Anthony Chau**
Partner-in-Charge,
KPMG China
+86 (21) 2212 3206
anthony.chau@kpmg.com

 **Jennifer Weng**
Regional Tax Partner-in-Charge,
Eastern & Western Region
+86 (21) 2212 3431
jennifer.weng@kpmg.com

 **John Timpany**
Regional Tax Partner-in-Charge,
Hong Kong (SAR)
+852 2143 8790
john.timpany@kpmg.com

Service Lines Leaders


Global Transfer Pricing Services

 **Xiaoyue Wang**
+86 (10) 8508 7090
xiaoyue.wang@kpmg.com


M&A Tax

 **Michael Wong**
+86 (10) 8508 7085
michael.wong@kpmg.com

People Services

 **Murray Sarelius**
+852 3927 5671
murray.sarelius@kpmg.com

Trade & Customs

 **Eric Zhou**
+86 (10) 8508 7610
ec.zhou@kpmg.com


Research & Development Tax

 **Bin Yang**
+86 (20) 3813 8605
bin.yang@kpmg.com


Tax Dispute Resolution

 **Tony Feng**
+86 (10) 8508 7531
tony.feng@kpmg.com

Tax Managed Services

 **Maggie Mao**
+86 (21) 2212 3020
maggie.y.mao@kpmg.com


Tax Transformation & Tax Technology

 **Michael Li**
+86 (21) 2212 3463
michael.y.li@kpmg.com


Legal & Indirect Tax

 **Lachlan Wolfers**
+852 2685 7791
lachlan.wolfers@kpmg.com

International Tax

 **Christopher Xing**
+852 2140 2275
christopher.xing@kpmg.com


Accounting & Payroll

 **Janet Wang**
+86 (21) 2212 3302
janet.z.wang@kpmg.com

US Corporate Tax


 **Wade Wagatsuma**
+852 2685 7806
wade.wagatsuma@kpmg.com

Global Compliance Management Services


 **Stanley Ho**
+852 2826 7296
stanley.ho@kpmg.com

Sector / Market segment Leaders

Auto

 **William Zhang**
+86 (21) 2212 3415
william.zhang@kpmg.com


Financial Services


 **Tracey Zhang**
+86 (10) 8508 7509
tracy.h.zhang@kpmg.com


Real Estate

 **Jennifer Weng**
+86 (21) 2212 3431
jennifer.weng@kpmg.com


US Desk

 **David Ling**
+1 609 874 4381
davidling@kpmg.com


 **Grace Luo**
+86 (20) 3813 8609
grace.luo@kpmg.com

 **John Timpany**
+852 2143 8790
john.timpany@kpmg.com


 **Ricky Gu**
+86 (20) 3813 8620
ricky.gu@kpmg.com

 **Shirley Shen**
+1 669 208 5352
yinghuashen1@kpmg.com


Energy & Natural Resources

 **Jessica Xie**
+86 (10) 8508 7540
jessica.xie@kpmg.com


Private Enterprise


 **Karmen Yeung**
+852 2143 8818
karmen.yeung@kpmg.com


Domestic Chinese Market


 **Wayne Tan**
+86 (28) 8673 3915
wayne.tan@kpmg.com

Japanese Market

 **Naoko Hirasawa**
+86 (21) 2212 3098
naoko.hirasawa@kpmg.com

 **Ling Lin**
+86 (755) 2547 1170
ling.lin@kpmg.com

 **Koko Tang**
+86 (755) 2547 4180
koko.tang@kpmg.com


 **John Wang**
+86 (571) 2803 8088
john.wang@kpmg.com

 **Vivian Chen**
+86 (755) 2547 1198
vivian.w.chen@kpmg.com


Technology, Media & Telecommunications

 **Sunny Leung**
+86 (21) 2212 3488
sunny.leung@kpmg.com


Technology, Media & Telecommunications

 **Kelly Liao**
+86 (20) 3813 8668
kelly.liao@kpmg.com

Asset Management Private Equity


 **Darren Bowdern**
+852 2826 7166
darren.bowdern@kpmg.com

Korean Market


 **Henry Kim**
+86 (10) 8508 7023
henry.kim@kpmg.com

Operations


China Tax Centre

 **Conrad Turley**
+86 (10) 8508 7513
conrad.turley@kpmg.com

China Tax Centre

 **Carol Cheng**
+86 (10) 8508 7644
carol.y.cheng@kpmg.com

Learning & Development Tax

 **Irene Yan**
+86 (10) 8508 7508
irene.yan@kpmg.com

kpmg.com/cn

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