



# GMS Flash Alert

## Immigration Edition

2020-085 | March 20, 2020



# Vietnam – Immigration, Travel, Quarantine Policies Instituted to Combat COVID-19

To combat the spread of COVID-19 in the country, the Vietnamese government is currently implementing multiple measures, including travel restrictions, compulsory medical declaration, medical checks, and quarantine upon arrival, with immediate effect.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, the government is limiting approval for new foreign workers to travel to and work in Vietnam in an effort to reduce external transmission of COVID-19 to Vietnam.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Weeks after announcing the recovery of all early 16 COVID-19 sufferers, Vietnam has confirmed it now has 77 (including the initial 16) infections as at 12:00PM (GMT+7), 18 March 2020.

The government sees the visa suspension policy as an effective measure to constrain the rapid spread of the virus given that COVID-19 infection is now surging in many countries. These and other measures described in this newsletter will impact companies with expatriate populations in terms of existing and future assignments inbound to Vietnam or outbound from Vietnam. Employees and their families who may have received offers for an international assignment to Vietnam may need to postpone the commencement of the assignment or may indeed be already there but on limited term visas. This could cause some anxiety, stress, and inconvenience, especially plans for relocation are already underway or where they are already in Vietnam on temporary visas.

The changes will require employers to re-consider their personnel and work arrangements due to travel limitations and work permit restrictions.

## Immigration Measures

With effect from 00:00 GMT+7, 18 March 2020, the following immigration measures shall be applied:

1. Vietnam temporarily suspends visa issuance for all foreigners to Vietnam. Even those with visa approval from the Vietnam immigration authorities will not be able to obtain visas at Vietnam embassies overseas.

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2. Foreigners entering Vietnam with a visa exemption or visa exemption book (issued to overseas Vietnamese and their spouse and children) or with a visa issued for some special cases (experts, managers, highly-skilled workers) must present a Medical Certificate proving they are negative for COVID-19 that is issued by the competent authorities of their home countries and accepted by Vietnam's competent authority in order to enter Vietnam.
3. Entrants to Vietnam must fill out health declaration forms (in paper or online at <https://tokhaiyte.vn>) and undergo a medical check-up and medical quarantine in accordance with Vietnam regulations.
4. Mass quarantine at government quarantine areas for 14 days shall be applicable for entrants from the U.S., Europe, ASEAN countries, Iran, People's Republic of China, and South Korea, and those that visit/transit through the above-noted jurisdictions within 14 days before their arrival date in Vietnam. Individuals who are not subject to mass quarantine shall be quarantined and health monitored at home and business premises in accordance with Ministry of Health's guidelines.

The above measures shall take place for 30 days from 18 March 2020, and be reviewed regularly by the Vietnamese government.

Further, Vietnam also suspended unilateral visa exemptions for citizens of all current 13 countries, with an effective date as noted below:

1. From 29 February 2020, effective for citizens of South Korea;
2. From 3 March 2020, effective for Italian citizens;
3. From 6 March 2020, effective for overseas Vietnamese, their spouses, and children living in South Korea and Italy;
4. From 12 March 2020, effective for citizens of Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, U.K., Germany, France, Spain;
5. From 12:00 GMT+7, 21 March 2020, effective for citizens of Belarus, Russia, and Japan. The visa exemption books issued for overseas Vietnamese, their spouses and children living in the above countries shall be "disabled" from this point of time. Those with valid visas still can enter Vietnam provided that they meet the medical requirements of Vietnam's government.

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## KPMG NOTE

Travelers seeking to enter Vietnam should regularly check the latest information from the nearest Vietnam embassy and should not transit through the above-mentioned areas if they wish to avoid being mass quarantined.

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## Temporary Suspension of Issuance of New Work Permits

In addition to the above immigration measures, local labour authorities are also implementing new regulations on the issuance of work permits for foreign workers, specifically:

1. Temporary suspension of the issuance of new work permits ("WP") for all foreigners from 17 March 2020.
2. The Labour authority will consider the extension of a WP only in the case of individuals who entered Vietnam prior to 1 January 2020 and have not travelled out of Vietnam from 1 January 2020 to date. Although the application of

this is unclear, currently the Labour authority will not receive work permit extension applications if the foreign national's passport shows that he/she has traveled out of Vietnam from 1 January 2020 up to the submission date.

3. For the application for a work permit extension, applicants must submit a health check certificate with an issue date after 11 February 2020, and the original passport (rather than a copy).

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## KPMG NOTE

Since the Labour authority has stopped issuing new work permits for foreign nationals, those already in Vietnam with a three-month-business-visa (DN visa) will not be able to transition to a work visa with a longer term. To deal with the situation, the sponsoring company should consider applying for a visa extension (which is valid for one to three months) in the absence of a work permit to enable the foreign employees to continue to stay in Vietnam while waiting for further guidance from the Labour authority. Family members accompanying the foreign employees with dependent visas should also be subject to a similar visa extension. The Immigration authority will consider extensions on a case-by-case basis.

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## FOOTNOTES:

1 For updates (in English) on measures introduced and activities related to the fight against COVID-19, see the [website](#) for the government of Vietnam.

For some basic information on measures taken by the Vietnamese government to combat COVID-19 and some joint U.S.-Vietnam efforts related to the COVID-19 crisis, see this [webpage](#) of the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam.

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## Contact us

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*\* Please note that KPMG LLP (U.S.) does not provide any immigration services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.*

**The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Vietnam.**

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