

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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People's Republic of China - Immigration/Travel Reminders During New Year Holiday

Since the People's Republic of China ("China" or "PRC") announced its decision to adjust its policies on COVID-19 control and cross-border travel in December 2022,¹ the China National Immigration Administration ("NIA") has recently announced detailed rules for implementation.

Some of the overseas Chinese embassies / consulates have also announced changes on Chinese visa applications in the last few weeks which could impact cross-border travel in the coming period.

WHY THIS MATTERS

We have observed that policies concerning Chinese visa applications and entry requirements have been subject to frequent updates in the last month. Individuals scheduling trips to and from the country and organisations planning to resume sending globally-mobile employees (and accompanying family) into and out of China need to be aware of the updates and current rules and conditions before traveling to China so that they are in compliance.

Restrictions that had been imposed on individuals travelling into and out of China in light of the COVID-19 outbreaks had impacted tourists, family visits, business travellers, and globally-mobile employees. This meant longer and more complicated visa application procedures, postponing relocation plans, and delaying assignments and increasing costs for employers.

However, in light of the diminishing threat of COVID-19 in China, and improvements in treatment and recovery, and with a situation that is becoming more stabilised, the government is taking steps to adjust its regulations and conditions for travel and entry into China to make it easier and smoother.

Domestic Rules

Recent measures/steps introduced by the National Immigration Administration (NIA), which could impact on cross-border travel are as noted below.

Outbound Travel for Chinese Nationals and Travellers Visiting Hong Kong and Macau

- Applications for Chinese passports will resume for purposes of outbound travelling.
- Issuance of PRC entry and exit passes will resume (including Hong Kong entry and exit permits, Macau entry and exit permits), and the issuance of exit and entry passes for border areas will resume.
- For travellers entering PRC from Hong Kong, a coronavirus nucleic acid test taken within 48 hours prior to flight departure is required. Travellers need to declare a negative testing results to China Customs by completing the Health Declaration Form.
- For travellers entering the PRC from Macau, the nucleic acid test is no longer required if the traveller has not travelled to any other foreign countries or regions outside of Macau seven days before entering mainland China.

Foreign Nationals

- Applications for the foreigner's visa, extension of the visa, and renewal for taking up employment in China has resumed.
- Port visas and 24 / 72 / 144 hour transit visas have also resumed (with the exception for South Korean nationals)

Overseas Rules

Overseas Chinese embassies / consulates in some countries / locations announced the latest requirements for making applications for Chinese visas².

- Multi-year multiple-entry visas issued before 26 March 2020, are still suspended for usage.
- Visa applications for entering China for tourism and medical treatment purposes are still suspended for the time being.
- The Chinese embassies in South Korea have suspended issuing short-term visas for South Korean citizens.

KPMG INSIGHTS

Multi-Year, Multi-Entry Visas

The Immigration Inspection Frontier at Shanghai Pudong International Airport has confirmed that multi-year multiple-entry visas issued before 26 March 2020, are still suspended and not valid for entering China.

KPMG INSIGHTS continued:

South Korean and Japanese Nationals – More Details

Meanwhile, South Korean and Japanese nationals are still eligible to enter China, if they hold the following types of valid visa/permit:

- Chinese visa issued after 28 March 2020;
- Chinese residence permit (for work, attending to personal affairs, family reunion and study purposes);
- Chinese Green Card.

South Korean nationals who wish to lodge an application for short-term visas (e.g., business (M) visa, trade/study exchanges (F) visa, and personal matter (S) visa) at the Chinese embassy in South Korea are required to submit an invitation letter issued by the relevant government authorities and bodies.

Considerations for Travel into China During New Year Holiday Period

In view of these updates, we remind individuals who wish to travel in the upcoming holiday season take the following into considerations when planning for their journeys:

- Foreign nationals who hold multi-year multiple-entry visas issued before 26 March 2020, should apply for a new visa based on their purpose for entering China.
- South Korean and Japanese nationals who plan to travel to China on short-term visas in the coming month should monitor the status of Chinese visa applications and plan their travel accordingly.
- International travellers who plan to enter China for commercial activities in the coming month are also advised to check on the operating hours of the overseas Chinese embassy / consulate in their jurisdiction during the Chinese New Year Holiday, and if any new requirements have been introduced in regards to Chinese visa applications.

* * * *

It is recommended that travellers to China check travel rules for updates, as changes may occur.

The adjustments in China's policies represent welcome steps to opening up China for the resumption of inbound and outbound travel under eased restrictions and a step-up in processing around visa and entry and exit pass applications.

What we have described is extensive and significant in breadth and scope. If travellers have questions or concerns, they may wish to consult with their travel agent, global-mobility professional, and/or immigration counsel, or a member of the Immigration team with KPMG in China (see the Contact Us section below).

We will continue to closely monitor these and future regulatory updates and will endeavour to keep readers of *GMS Flash Alert* informed.

FOOTNOTES:

1 For information in English concerning the modifications to China's COVID-19 policies and travel policies, see The State Council of the People's Republic of China webpage at:

<http://english.www.gov.cn/2020special/5e32830ec6d019625c60433b/5e32832ac6d019625c60433d> .

2 For additional information, see "The Chinese Embassy in the UK Holds a Briefing on China's COVID Situation and Respond Policies" (6 January 2023) on the website of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at: http://gb.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/PressandMedia/Spokepersons/202301/t20230107_11003861.htm . Also see "Ambassador Zheng Zeguang Pointed out in his Signed Article in The Guardian: China has always put people and their lives front and centre. Recent optimisation and adjustment of response measures is based on scientific assessment" (31 December 2022) on the Embassy's website at: http://gb.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/dshdjjh/202212/t20221231_10999243.htm .

For information particular to U.S. citizens entering and exiting China, see the U.S. Embassy & Consulates in China webpage: <https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/covid-19-information/> .

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Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or the following professional with the KPMG International member firm in the People's Republic of China:



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** Please note the KPMG International member firm in the United States does not provide immigration or labour law 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 the People's Republic of China.

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