

CLIENT ALERT

China Opens Up: Certain Foreign Nationals Can Come Back – With Conditions

Sep.24.2020

On September 23, 2020, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China (MFA) announced its decision to allow foreign nationals holding certain valid Chinese residence permits to enter China with no need to apply for new visas **starting midnight, September 28, 2020**. This marks a loosening of MFA’s policy to temporarily bar foreign nationals holding valid visas or residence permits from re-entering the country announced on March 26, 2020 (“March 26 Announcement”).

The announcement provides that the foreign nationals with the following three types of residence permits will be allowed to re-enter the country:

- Work/employment
- Personal matters
- Family reunion

If a foreign national holds any of the three visas and it has expired after March 28, 2020, such foreign national may apply for a new visa by presenting the expired residence permit and supporting documents to a Chinese Embassy or Consulate on the condition that the purpose of foreign national’s visit to China has not changed.

MFA has stated that China will continue to the other provisions of the March 26 Announcement remain in force (*e.g.*, foreign nationals holding diplomatic, service, courtesy, C visas, or visas issued after the March 26 Announcement can still enter China).

Please note that foreign nationals returning to China must strictly obey Chinese regulations on epidemic prevention and control. The latest regulations issued in July include:

- Foreign passengers must complete coronavirus tests (nucleic acid tests) within 5 days before boarding. The tests must be conducted in institutions designated or approved by the Chinese Embassies.
- Foreign passengers must apply for declaration of health status to Chinese Embassies or Consulates with negative test results.
- Foreign nationals entering China with negative test results must submit to quarantine and medical inspection procedures:
 - Foreign nationals must take nucleic acid tests by China Customs at the port of entry.
 - Foreign nationals must submit to a 7-day quarantine at designated places with their own expense and take a second time nucleic acid tests on the 5th day of quarantine.
 - If a foreign national takes a second time nucleic acid test and its result is negative, the foreign national may quarantine at home (if it has a separate room and separate bathroom from the rest of the home) for 7 days.
 - A foreign national must take a nucleic acid test for the third time upon expiration of the combined 14-day quarantine period.

- Foreign nationals with symptoms during quarantine at home or who test positive after the combined 14-day quarantine will be sent to designated medical institutions for investigation and treatment. For suspected cases, confirmed cases and asymptomatic infection, their close contacts will be subject to medical observation at designated places.

For the official announcement from MFA, please go to:

http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-09/23/content_5546462.htm

For the latest regulations on epidemic prevention and control, please go to:

http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-07/23/content_5529594.htm

http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2020-07/21/content_5528639.htm

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