

Mobility: Immigration alert

January 2023

United States

Suspension of routine visa services and imposition of COVID-19 testing requirement impacting travel from the People's Republic of China

Executive summary

On 15 December 2022, U.S. Mission China Consular Services announced that the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai are providing passport and emergency citizen services only. Additionally, U.S. Consulates General in Wuhan, Shenyang, and Guangzhou will only be providing emergency consular services until further notice.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has also acted in response to the surge of COVID-19 cases in the People's Republic of China (PRC) by imposing a negative COVID-19 test requirement for air passengers entering the United States from the PRC. Effective 12:01 ET am on 5 January 2023, all travellers aged two years and older entering the U.S. on flights originating from the PRC, including Hong Kong and Macao, must provide proof of a negative viral COVID-19 test taken within two days of boarding or documentation of recovery from COVID-19. Both molecular and antigen tests will be accepted.

These measures apply regardless of nationality and vaccination status. Further, the testing requirement also applies to travellers boarding a flight to the U.S. from Incheon International airport, Vancouver International airport, or Toronto Pearson International airport if they have been in the PRC, Hong Kong, or Macau, within the past 10 days.

Key developments

Both immigrant visa and nonimmigrant visa applicants who had secured appointment dates at a consular post in the PRC ought to have been notified of their cancellation.

Nonimmigrant visa applicants will be able to reschedule and attend an interview after the suspension is lifted while immigrant visa applicants will need to await notification of rescheduling by the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou, the only post in the PRC that processes immigrant visa applications.

Travellers who are already in possession of a valid visa that aligns with the purpose of their travel may board a flight to the U.S. originating from the PRC, provided that they possess one of the following to present to the airline at the time of boarding:

- ▶ A paper or digital copy of negative COVID-19 viral test results taken within two days of boarding
- ▶ Documentation of recovery for passengers who tested positive more than 10 days and fewer than 90 days before boarding a flight to the U.S.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.



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