



# China is Back Open for Business for Some European Travelers

Insights

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After months of closed borders, China is beginning to reopen to certain travelers from Europe. While recreational travel is still prohibited, some European employers may now be able to send their people to China. Below is a summary of what employers and travelers need to know about China's reopening.

## **Visitors Already Holding Work or Residence Permits May Apply for a Visa to Travel to China.**

As of August 10, 2020, China will begin to allow certain business travelers from Albania, Ireland, Estonia, Austria, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Belgium, Iceland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, Denmark, Germany, France, Finland, the Netherlands, Montenegro, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Romania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Serbia, Cyprus, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Business travelers from any of the above countries may apply for a visa to visit China if they have any of the following:

- a valid residence permit;
- a valid work permit; or
- a permit for family reunification and personal matters.

## **Prevention Measures Travelers Must Follow**

The Chinese government has asked all visitors entering China to comply with the epidemic prevention regulations in the areas they are visiting. As part of the visa approval process, travelers may be required to submit the COVID testing results obtained from a testing facility approved by the Chinese consulate. Visitors are tested upon arrival at the airport and required to quarantine at a designated hotel for at least 14 days upon entry. Visitors must pay for the quarantine accommodations.

## **What to Expect During the Quarantine Period**

Visitors will not be permitted to leave their designated quarantine location – nor China itself – for the duration of the quarantine period. The quarantine clock may be reset if a visitor is found to have left his/her room at the quarantine facility. Both Chinese and foreign nationals may also be sentenced to up to three years in prison if they do not comply with the quarantine mandate, testing, or concealing health conditions.

## **After Quarantine**

After leaving the quarantine facility, the employee will be expected to comply with the government's contact tracing requirements by downloading certain software and scanning her phone at different locations throughout the day. Employers should educate employees on the relevant privacy issues, and those that provide work devices that may contain sensitive information need to ensure the security thereof.

Provinces and cities may ask travelers to follow additional procedures, which may change quickly and without notice. Employees' ability to travel domestically may be significantly hampered and local-level quarantine may be imposed upon entry into a different province or city.

## **What Should Employers Do?**

Employers who are considering sending employees to China should be aware that policies and procedures are constantly changing and consider this when making plans for projects or other arrangements. They should plan in advance for significant delays and increased travel costs. If there is another outbreak, employers may be expected to evacuate employees and secure their medical treatment in a country whose health system may not be on par with that to which they are accustomed.

Keep in mind travel regulations are changing frequently; please contact a Fisher Phillips International Practice Group member to confirm up-to-date information.

## ***Related People***



**Nan Sato, CIPP/E, CIPP/C**  
Partner  
610.230.2148  
Email

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