



Immigration news alerts

COVID-19

COVID-19 (also previously referred to as 2019 Novel Coronavirus or 2019-nCoV) is a virus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China. While it is unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people, authorities across the globe are issuing travel health notices related to this outbreak.

In this series of news alerts, we will provide you with immigration updates to keep you updated on the rapidly evolving situation within our region.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong (HK) to issue red alert for entire rest of the world

Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) | 17 March 2020

Chief Executive Carrie Lam has announced that the government will issue a red outbound travel alert for the entire world, except mainland China, Macau and Taiwan.

From Thursday, 19 March 2020, people coming in from all other places, even if they are Special Administrative Region (SAR) residents, will either be quarantined at home for 14 days or put under medical surveillance. Close contacts of

confirmed cases will be sent to quarantine centres.

Since 8 February 2020, visitors and locals arriving from mainland China have already been required to undergo self-quarantine, which leaves only people arriving from Macau or Taiwan exempt from the new regulation.

Lam urged all Hong Kong residents to avoid non-essential travel, as she said that the new quarantine arrangements and medical surveillance will make sure “that previous efforts won't go to waste”.

Speaking ahead of the weekly Executive Council meeting, Lam said the government hasn't opted for a total entry ban on non-residents, because it could give rise to other problems on the economic front. For the full transcript of her remarks, please click [here](#).



[More information](#)

India

Additional travel advisory for COVID-19

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare | 17 March 2020

Travel of passengers from Afghanistan, Philippines, and Malaysia to India is prohibited with immediate effect. No flight shall take off from these countries to India after 15.00 hours Indian Standard Time (IST). The airline shall enforce this at the port of initial departure. This instruction is a temporary measure and shall be in force till 31 March 2020.



[More information](#)

Indonesia

Indonesia suspends visa-free policy, expands ban for people from worst-hit countries

The Jakarta Post | 17 March 2020

The Indonesian government has suspended its visa exemption policy for short-stay visit, visa-on-arrival and diplomatic/service visa-free facilities for all countries, for one month.

Travel restrictions will continue to apply for visitors from China and South Korea's regions of Daegu City and Gyeongsangbuk-do Province. Entry and transit will also be denied for visitors/travellers who have travelled to the following countries in the last 14 days: Iran, Italy, Vatican, Spain, France, Germany, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

All foreigners/travellers who wish to visit Indonesia must obtain a visa from Indonesian missions in accordance with the purpose of their visit. Upon submission, applicants must provide health certificate issued by relevant health authorities from their respective countries.

The government advises all Indonesian citizens to restrict non-essential outbound travels. Indonesian citizens currently travelling abroad are advised to return to Indonesia at the earliest possible time to avoid further travel disruptions.

In addition, Indonesian citizens who have travelled to the countries above will be subjected to an additional screening shall be carried out by the Port Health Authority upon arrival. If the additional screening shows initial symptoms of COVID-19, a 14-day observation in a government facility will be applied; if no initial symptom is found, a 14-day self-quarantine will be strongly recommended.

These measures will take effect on Friday, 20 March at 00.00 Western Indonesia Time (GMT+7). These measures are temporary and shall be evaluated pursuant to further development.



[More information](#)

Malaysia

Movement control order

17 March 2020

Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin [announced on Monday night](#), 16 March 2020 measures to restrict movement nationwide, starting from 18 March until 31 March, in a bid to stem the rising number of coronavirus cases.

Under this movement control order:

- All Malaysian passport holders are not allowed to travel out of Malaysia.
- Malaysians returning from overseas will be required to undergo self-quarantine for 14 days. Spouses and children of Malaysians are also allowed to enter Malaysia if they hold a valid Long Term Social Visit Pass.
- Foreign diplomats who are currently on duty at their respective embassies in Malaysia are allowed to enter, but will be required to undergo self-quarantine for 14 days. The same applies to their dependents if they are holding a valid Dependent Pass.
- Foreigners (including expatriates residing in Malaysia) are allowed to travel out of Malaysia.
- Expatriates and their family members holding valid passes in Malaysia will not be allowed to enter Malaysia if they are currently out of the country.
- Transit flights to a third destination that do not require immigration checks are allowed to continue.

- The e-Gate and e-gate Malaysia Automated Clearance System (MACS) at the Departure Hall will be closed until further notice.

A delay to processing time of immigration applications can also be expected during this period, as:

- All government and private offices will be closed.
- The immigration Department in Putrajaya will be open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. only.
- Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDeC) will be closed.
- Malaysia Expatriate Talent Service Centre (MYXpats) will be closed. All communication with MYXpats will be limited to [email](#) only, and a response can be expected within two working days.
- Submissions are manual, and limited to urgent cases only (i.e. Special Pass).

Philippines

Bureau of Immigration (BI) imposes flight restrictions during Luzon-wide quarantine

Philippine News Agency | 17 March 2020

BI Commissioner Jaime Morente announced measures for enhanced community quarantine over Luzon. Effective midnight on 17 March, until midnight of 13 April, land, air, and sea travel shall be restricted. Apart from those already in transit, all passengers regardless of nationality will temporarily not be allowed to enter the country.

Outbound passengers intending to depart the Philippines from any international airport in Luzon shall be allowed only until midnight of 20 March. Inbound passengers who are already in transit upon effectivity of the quarantine shall be allowed to enter, but will be referred to the Bureau of Quarantine if coming from countries with existing travel restrictions.

Only inbound Filipino citizens, their foreign spouse or children, holders of permanent resident visas, and holders of 9(e) diplomat visas issued by the Philippine government shall be allowed entry. Also exempted from the ban are arriving and departing uniformed personnel on official business, especially those transporting medical supplies, laboratory specimens related to COVID-19, and other humanitarian assistance.

Meanwhile, Morente also advised all foreigners intending to leave before the 72-hour deadline to proceed to BI field offices, should they need to settle immigration obligations before leaving the country.



[More information](#)

Singapore

Companies affected by Malaysia travel restrictions to get financial support

Channel NewsAsia | 17 March 2020

Companies affected by Malaysia's travel restrictions amid the COVID-19 outbreak will receive an allowance of S\$50 per worker per night for 14 nights to cover the extra costs incurred, said Manpower Minister Josephine Teo. This comes after Malaysia announced it would bar citizens from going overseas and foreigners from entering the country for about two weeks starting Wednesday, 18 March 2020.

Mrs Teo said that affected workers should first try to stay with friends, family and colleagues who can accommodate them, and if not—hotels or dormitories. “For every affected worker, we will provide the firms with the support of S\$50 a night for 14 nights,” she said, adding that more details on how to apply will be shared.

Malaysia has assured Singapore that the flow of goods and cargo between the two countries will continue.

For more information on the range of accommodation options available for companies, please visit the Ministry of Manpower page [here](#).



More information

Health advisory for persons issued Stay-Home Notice

Ministry of Health | Updated as of 18 March 2020

Persons issued a Stay-Home Notice (SHN) should remain in their place of residence at all times during the 14-day period. For an updated list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the SHN, please refer to the link below.



More information

Contact

Should you have any comments or questions arising from this newsletter, please feel free to contact me.



Christina Karl

SEA Immigration Leader
Deloitte Southeast Asia

+65 6800 3997
ckarl@deloitte.com



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