



## 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.

*Note: If you have trouble accessing any of the links below, please try to copy and paste them directly into your browser.*

#### Australia

##### **Australia closes borders to all visitors**

The Sydney Morning Herald | 19 March 2020

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has announced a travel ban will be placed on all people who are not Australian residents coming to the country from 9 p.m. on Friday, 20 March.

More than one million Australians travelling and living overseas face being stranded if they don't find a way home by the end of the March. The government has urged some stranded travellers to consider charter flights costing up to \$300,000.

Australian Ambassador to Perú and Bolivia, Diana Nelson, said on social media Australians seeking to depart Peru from Lima or Cusco, or from La Paz in Bolivia, should contact a commercial company running commercial flights.

The Morrison government insists it has no plans for any more assisted departures from overseas like the two Qantas emergency flights it organised earlier this year for Australians stuck in the Chinese province of Wuhan.

 [More information](#)

## China

### **Concentrated observation required for people arriving in Beijing from other countries**

The State Council of the People's Republic of China | 19 March 2020

The Beijing municipality has required people arriving in the city from other countries to undergo a self-paid 14-day concentrated medical observation from 18 March 2020.

According to the city's newly revised quarantine rules for border entries, only those aged above 70 or under 14, pregnant, or with fundamental diseases who are not suitable for concentrated observation can apply for home observation.

The rules also require returnees entering China through ports outside Beijing to report their schedules and information to their Beijing employers and residential communities before arrival, and also be subjected to the observation rules.

 [More information](#)

### **14-day home medical observation or concentrated medical observation for travellers to Shanghai** *(Translated from Chinese)*

Municipal Leading Group for Epidemic Prevention and Control | 19 March 2020

With effect from 12 a.m. on 20 March, travellers from the following eight countries will be required to undergo a 14-day home medical observation or concentrated medical observation: Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Malaysia, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

This is in addition to the 16 countries that are already on the list: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States.

 [More information](#)

### **Guangdong strengthens measures to reduce imported COVID-19 cases**

Shenzhen Foreign Affairs Office | 19 March 2020

With effect from 12 a.m. on 19 March, all Chinese nationals arriving in Guangdong from overseas and all foreign nationals who have travelled to the following list of 19 countries in the past 14 days prior to entering Guangdong shall be subjected to a 14-day home or collective quarantine for medical observation: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, and United States.



[More information](#)

### **India**

#### **No commercial international flights to land in India from 22 March for a week**

The Times of India | 19 March 2020

India has barred all scheduled commercial flights from Sunday, 22 March for a week. No scheduled international commercial passenger aircraft shall take off from any foreign airport for any airport in India after 00.01 hours (GMT) on 22 March 2020. These instructions shall remain in force until 00.01 hours GMT on 29 March 2020.

Furthermore, a maximum travel time of 20 hours is permissible for such commercial passenger aircraft to land in India. Accordingly, no incoming scheduled international commercial passenger aircraft shall be allowed to disembark its passengers (Indian or foreigner) on Indian soil after 20.01 hours (GMT) on 22 March.



[More information](#)

### **Indonesia**

#### **Temporary closure of counters at Ministry of Manpower office**

19 March 2020

The following measures are currently in effect at the Ministry of Manpower:

- Counters at the Ministry of Manpower office have been temporarily closed to avoid direct contact between officers and applicants.
- To change work location in the Foreign Manpower Utilisation Plan (RPTKA), amend job titles, and withdraw from the skills development fund, please submit applications via [email](#).
- For consultations, please use the hotline numbers (08111385733 or 081519193369) instead of making physical visits to the Ministry of Manpower office.
- Submission procedures for foreigner services, including work permits and Foreign Manpower Utilisation Plan (RPTKA), will continue as usual.

## **Reduced operational hours for Imigrasi Jakarta Selatan** *(Translated from Bahasa Indonesia)*

Imigrasi Jakarta Selatan | 19 March 2020

On 19 March 2020, Imigrasi Jakarta Selatan uploaded an infographic on its official Instagram account (@kanimjaksel) announcing that:

- Operational hours for foreigners seeking immigration services will be reduced to 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- All applications must be submitted to the Dropbox, and not through direct contact with an officer.



[More information](#)

## **Japan**

### **Visa restrictions**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 18 March 2020

Effective from 0:00 a.m. (JST) on 21 March until 30 April (this period may be subjected to renewal), the following groups of travellers may not be permitted to enter Japan:

- Travellers with single or multiple-entry visas issued on or before 20 March by Japanese Embassies or Consulates General in subject countries<sup>1</sup>.
- Travellers with passports issued by the subject countries for which visa exemption measures have been suspended, and who intend to enter Japan without obtaining a visa.

All nationals arriving from subject countries will need to wait for 14 days at a location designated by the quarantine station chief, and refrain from using public transportation.

<sup>1</sup> *Schengen countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland), Andorra, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Ireland, Monaco, Romania, San Marino, the United Kingdom, and Vatican)*



[More information](#)

## **Macao**

### **Macao to ban re-entry of any registered foreign non-resident workers**

Government Information Bureau | 18 March 2020

Macao-registered non-resident workers from overseas countries, if currently outside the city, will be prohibited from re-entering Macao, starting midnight on

Thursday, 19 March.

The ban will not cover those registered non-resident workers who at the same time are residents either of mainland China, Hong Kong or Taiwan.

According to the Executive Order, health authorities have the power to exempt foreign non-resident workers from compliance with the new measure under certain circumstances. That would apply in matters serving the public interest, particularly those relating either to disease prevention and control, or emergency rescue. Such exemption could be granted also with a view to ensuring proper operation of public services in the community and meeting the basic day-to-day needs of the Macao public.

A ban prohibiting general visitors from overseas countries from entering Macao had already taken effect on 18 March 2020. Residents of either mainland China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan are exempted from the measure.



[More information](#)

## New Zealand

### **New Zealand shutting borders to everyone except citizens, residents**

The New Zealand Herald | 19 March 2020

With effect from 11.59 p.m. on 19 March 2020, New Zealand's borders will be closed to everyone in the world except for New Zealand citizens and residents. Unlike previous border restrictions, the new rules will also apply to would-be travellers from the Pacific Islands.

Any returning New Zealanders will still be required to self-isolate for 14 days upon entry. The partners, legal guardians or any dependent children travelling with returning Kiwis may also return, but will need to self-isolate as well. Immediate family members cannot travel by themselves and need to travel with a New Zealand citizen or resident family member on the same flight home.

Exemptions are in place for “key workers” in the health sector, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said, and the rules would not affect freight coming into New Zealand.

More than 600,000 New Zealanders live in Australia, and Ardern said they should not travel.



[More information](#)

## Philippines

## **Temporary suspension of visa issuance and visa-free privilege**

Department of Foreign Affairs | 19 March 2020

Effective immediately until further notice, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) is temporarily suspending visa issuance at all of its Foreign Service Posts.

With this temporary suspension, all visa-free privileges including those based on Visa Waiver Agreements, those under Executive Order 408, s.1960, and for holders of Hong Kong and Macau SAR passports, Macau-Portuguese passports, and British National Overseas passports, will be temporarily suspended with effect from 22 March.

Foreign spouses and children of Filipino nationals are exempted from this temporary suspension.

The temporary suspension of visa issuance will deem all previously issued visas cancelled, and foreigners with visas issued by Philippine Foreign Service Posts (primarily 9a Temporary Visitor/Tourist visas) will not be allowed entry into the country starting 22 March.

However, visas previously issued to accredited Foreign Government and International Organisation officials and their dependents will remain valid and will be honoured when they enter the country even after said date. The same is true for visas previously issued to foreign spouses and children of Filipino nationals.

This temporary suspension has no impact on foreign nationals that are already in the country or on holders of visas issued by other government agencies.



**More information**

## **Advisory to the public**

Bureau of Immigration | 19 March 2020

The following transactions at the Bureau of Immigration (BI) offices in Luzon, including NCR, will be temporarily suspended except for outbound passengers intending to depart the Philippines from any of the international airports in Luzon during the period of the Enhanced Community Quarantine effective 17 March 2020 until 12 a.m. on 13 April 2020:

1. Filing of applications for extension of/conversion to non-immigrant/immigrant visa including hearing/interview;
2. Filing of applications regarding Filipino citizenship including RA 9225 including hearing/interview;
3. Filing for downgrading of visa status;
4. Filing for extension of tourist visa;
5. Filing of application for special work permits/provisional work permits;
6. Filing for the renewal of ACR I-Cards; and
7. Implementation of BOC approved visa applications for extension of/conversion to non-immigrant/immigrant visas.

All aliens whose visas will expire during the duration of the Enhanced Community Quarantine shall be allowed to file their applications for extension provided they file their applications within 30 days from the lifting of the Enhanced Community Quarantine.

BI shall maintain its skeletal workforce to cater to outbound passengers intending

to depart the Philippines during the Enhanced Community Quarantine period. Outbound passengers will be required to present their outbound tickets prior to entry at BI offices.



[More information](#)

## Singapore

### **Temporary housing support for employers affected by Malaysia's Movement Control Order**

Ministry of Manpower | 19 March 2020

With the implementation of a Movement Control Order which bans Malaysia citizens from going overseas and non-Malaysia citizens from entering Malaysia between 18 March 2020 and 31 March 2020, local employers are making efforts at short notice to house in Singapore, affected workers who commute across the Singapore-Malaysia border frequently.

To help employers defray the additional costs of housing affected workers in short-term housing, eligible employers can apply for temporary housing support of \$50 per affected worker per night, capped at 14 nights to cover the extra housing costs incurred. Affected workers refer to workers who:

- a. Are Singapore Citizens, Permanent Residents or Work Pass holders who are Malaysia citizens;
- b. Reside in Malaysia and commute to Singapore; and
- c. Are housed in Singapore in hotels, dormitories or rented accommodation between 18 March and 31 March 2020.

Employers who wish to apply for the temporary housing support can submit their applications on the MOM website from 1 April 2020. Conditions will include ensuring that their employees are in employment between 18 March 2020 and 31 March 2020. Applications should only be submitted after the affected worker has completed his/her stay in the short-term housing. More details will be released on the MOM website shortly.



[More information](#)

## Contact

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



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