

# COVID-19 and Mobility

## Current China Travel and Immigration Strategies

### Q&A REPORT

*Have questions not covered here? Reach out to your dedicated Newland Chase contact.*

*Don't have one? [Contact us](#) to schedule a consultation with one of our experts.*

[Watch this webinar on-demand](#)



What is a 'PU' letter?

A PU letter is an official letter of invitation for business and work purposes issued by the provincial Foreign Affairs Offices (FAO) in China. The FAOs in different cities have various requirements and processing times. "PU" stands for "普通" in Chinese, which means the letter is issued to ordinary passport holders. We noticed the trend that the FAO in majority cities in China have tightened up the requirements for issuance of PU letters and now require more concrete evidence demonstrating that the proposed visit is truly essential.



Are all China business visas that were issued in the US before March 28 actually "invalid" or just "suspended" until further notice?

According to current policy, all China business visas that were issued in the US before March 28 are suspended until further notice.



If the employee is already in China and will receive his work permit soon, but his family is in Germany, is there a way for the family to join him in China without a PU letter?

According to current policy, there is no other option for family members to join a German employee in China without a PU letter. We note that almost all cities in China have suspended the issuance of PU letters to family dependents and many Chinese consulates have suspended the issuance of visas to family dependents even if they are holding a valid PU letter. This is a dynamic situation.



Is there any way to circumvent the requirement to quarantine upon arrival in China?

Quarantine is mandatory and policy about quarantine may vary from city to city in China and will change from time to time. Contact your Newland Chase representative for further details.



Are consulates still issuing Z visas (work visas)? Or is it necessary to apply for a PU letter/M visa and then convert to a work permit?

Yes, the majority of consulates are issuing Z visas. Whether it is necessary to apply for a PU letter/M visa and then convert to a work permit depends on the consulates. Some consulates require both PU letter and notification letter for work permit when applying for Z visa.



If the employee is a German national in Brazil, should we apply for an M visa or a Z visa to have a better chance of getting an S1 visa for his wife to accompany him to Beijing?

If the employee is a German national in Brazil, normally he should apply for Z visa with PU letter and Notification letter for work permit required. But almost all cities in China have suspended the issuance of PU letters to family dependents and many Chinese consulates of suspended the issuance of visas to family dependents. According to current policy, there will be no difference for visa application of his wife no matter he applies for M visa or Z visa.



Which countries are on the current banned list?

At the time of writing, the UK, France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Ethiopia are on the current list of the banned countries.



What airports provide IgM and Nucleic Acid tests?

The capabilities of providing IgM and Nucleic Acid tests depend on the specific airport. For instance, there is few rapid test facilities in most US international airports.



Can you provide a status update on the "Z" visa for South Korean citizens?

The Chinese consulates in Korea resumed visa issuance recently. Based on our latest communication with the Chinese consulates in Korea, a Notification letter of work permit is required instead of a PU letter for a Z visa.

We note that a "PU letter" (invitation letter from the Chinese government)/Notification letter of work permit no longer guarantees the approval of the visa application. Consulates also require a detailed explanation of why it is essential for the applicant to enter China at this time – such as a letter of invitation from the Chinese company.



So, any existing 'business' visas are no longer valid and a new visa would need to be applied for? Is this the case for UK/US citizens with 10-year visas issued before Covid-19?

According to current policy, any existing 'business' visas issued before 28 March are no longer valid until further notice. For travelers departed from UK, only visas issued after 3 November 2020 will not be affected. This is also the case for UK/US citizens with 10-year visas issued before Covid-19. A new visa should be applied for if the current one issued before the said timeline.



If I hold a valid work and residence permit and leave China for vacation/home leave, what is the procedure for my eventual return to China 1-2 months later?

Until now, the UK, France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Ethiopia are on the current list of the banned countries. This is a dynamic list. If you are still holding a valid work and residence permit and departing from the country that is not on the banned list, you should return to China by following the up-to-date quarantine policy and other boarding requirements. Contact your Newland Chase representative so we can assess the details for you before your trip.



My whole family had residence permits. The purpose of my residence permit was for study. Would this qualify?

Until now, only residence permit holders of three types: work, reunion and personal matters qualified. Contact your Newland Chase representative so we can assess the details for you or if you have any specific questions.



Traveler is a US passport holder and has a valid China work permit and a residence permit which expired in September. The traveler permanently lives in Shanghai and has been stuck in the US since March. Does permanent residence qualify for essential business to travel back to China?

According to current policy, a US passport holder who has a valid China work permit and a residence permit which expired after 28 March should apply for a new entry visa. Normally, both the valid work permit and an employment letter from the China employer are required.

We note that, even holding a valid China work permit, Chinese consulates in several cities also require a detailed explanation of why it is essential for the applicant to enter China at this time – that's the reason why an employment letter from the Chinese company is required. Therefore, "permanent residence" does not necessarily qualify as essential business to travel back. If the permanent resident holds a valid Chinese Permanent Residence Card, he/she could travel back without applying for a new visa.

This white paper was prepared by Newland Chase.

**Learn more about our Guided-Entry Visa solution.** We are uniquely positioned to assess your eligibility to reenter China, navigating you through the complex visa issuance process and assisting in arranging any required documentation. [Schedule a consultation with one of our experts](#) for:

- A personalized assessment to determine visa eligibility
- Guidance on every step of the visa process, including complex government documents and assistance in obtaining them
- Access to our expert consultant, a single point of contact, who will manage the process from start to finish

**We're here to help with all global immigration needs.** [Contact us](#) to schedule a consultation to learn how we can support your business during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and keep up-to-date with the latest COVID-19 travel and immigration updates on our dedicated online resource – [COVID-19: Latest Travel and Immigration Disruption](#).

This publication is not intended as a substitute for legal advice. Readers are reminded that immigration laws are subject to change. We are not responsible for any loss arising from reliance on this publication. Please contact Newland Chase should you require any additional clarification or case-specific advice.

**Newland Chase**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of CIBT, is the leading global provider of immigration and visa services for corporations and individuals with over 1,700 expert immigration and visa professionals, attorneys and qualified migration consultants located in over 70 offices in 25 countries.

With thirty years of experience, **CIBT** is the primary service provider to 75% of Fortune 500 companies. CIBT offers a comprehensive suite of services under two primary brands: **Newland Chase**, focused on global immigration strategy and advisory services for corporations worldwide and **CIBTvisas**, the market leader for business and other travel visa services for corporate and individual clients.