

# THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN HONG KONG

## Position Paper

---

### PRC STAFF VISA ISSUES

---

#### The Issue

In spite of some positive recent steps, Hong Kong and PRC restrictions on visas and visa processing for PRC-national staff traveling to or working in Hong Kong continue to be very restrictive and have a negative impact on the SAR's international competitiveness. PRC-national staff of Hong Kong-based firms and multinationals are constrained in their ability to travel to Hong Kong for business meetings, training, or short-term developmental assignments. Specialized PRC professionals, except in the limited areas of finance and IT, cannot obtain work visas to fill positions in multinational companies in Hong Kong even though comparable local professionals are not available. Recent improvements such as training, "special talent scheme", and "professional" visas are positive steps, but they are limited, inflexible, and difficult to acquire.

The difficulty or inability to obtain multiple-entry visitor or work visas on a timely basis, as is possible for non-PRC nationals, forces companies to use locations other than Hong Kong as the site for business meetings, special projects and task forces, and normal developmental and training assignments. This damages the SAR's competitiveness and attractiveness as a place to establish regional business centers.

#### Position

***The SAR and PRC government authorities should continue to address PRC-national staff visa issues to improve mutually beneficially business development activities and to allow Hong Kong-based companies to offer the same training and development opportunities to their PRC-national staff as to their employees of other nationalities .***

#### Recommendations

*The following measures would alleviate obstacles currently experienced by the business community:*

- ***The Hong Kong SAR government should simplify the visa application process, standardize the lead-time for visa approval, and issue multiple-entry visas valid for one year.*** To enable HK-based companies with operations in the PRC to conduct business without unnecessary human-resource constraints, there is a need for standard, more rapid turn-around time on Hong Kong visas, multiple-entry visa provisions, and visa validity for a period of one year.
- ***The PRC government should issue passports with multiple-exit visas permitting PRC-national staff a wide time frame for entering Hong Kong.*** There is a need for multiple-exit permits, good for three to six months from the date of issue, in order to enable HK-based companies to train their PRC-national staff in Hong Kong without undue constraints.
- ***The Hong Kong SAR government should issue work permits to PRC-national staff valid for stays of one to three years.*** To enable effective personnel development, especially in technical and management areas, there is a need for Hong Kong permits for periods of one to three years to allow for development assignments of this duration.
- ***The PRC government should make multiple-exit permits available to PRC-national staff possessing Hong Kong work permits. Provisions should also be made to enable PRC passports to be renewed in Hong Kong.*** Multiple-exit permits and renewable passports should be available to enable PRC-nationals employed by Hong Kong-based companies to travel freely between Hong Kong and the PRC.