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Global Immigration alert

April 2026

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Hong Kong

Hong Kong clarifies departure requirements for individuals applying for an extension of stay

Executive summary

In April 2026, the Hong Kong Immigration Department added an addendum to the [Guidebook for Entry for Employment as Professionals in Hong Kong](#), clarifying that individuals who are subject to a limit of stay must depart Hong Kong before the expiry of their current stay regardless of whether they are in the process of a visa extension application, unless exceptional circumstances are approved by the Director of Immigration.

Background

Individuals permitted to work or reside in Hong Kong are granted a specified limit of stay and must not remain in Hong Kong beyond this period unless an extension of stay has been officially approved by the Director of Immigration.

Effective 1 March 2026, the Immigration Department enhanced extension arrangements under certain employment and talent admission schemes by [expanding](#) the visa extension application window from four weeks to three months prior to visa expiry.

Key developments

The following considerations outline the current state of implementation of the Immigration Department's extension of stay policy:

- Individuals subject to a limit of stay must depart Hong Kong before the expiry of their authorized stay even if an application for an extension of stay has been submitted and remains under processing, unless approved under exceptional circumstances.
- Applicants who have been granted permission to remain in Hong Kong under certain employment and talent admission schemes should submit extension of stay applications as early as possible within the three-month

period prior to expiry and, in all circumstances, at least six weeks before the expiry of their current limit of stay.

- Processing of extension applications typically takes approximately two to three weeks upon receipt of all required documentation and the applicable application fee, although actual processing times may vary depending on individual circumstances and application volumes.
- Approval of the visa extension applications is not guaranteed.

Impact on employers

Employers may review their internal immigration tracking and mobility processes, encourage early preparation of extension filings and provide guidance to impacted individuals on travel and work arrangements while extension applications are pending.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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