

ONE WAY AMERICA

Your Guide to Hong-Kong

TELEPHONE: Country code (+852). Hong Kong does not use area codes.

STANDARD TIME: GMT/UTC +8 hours. Hong Kong does not observe daylight saving time.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES: Metric.

ELECTRICITY: 220v AC, 50Hz. Hong Kong generally uses Type G three-pin electrical sockets, similar to those used in the United Kingdom. U.S. appliances designed for 110–120v will normally require a suitable voltage converter or transformer, as well as a plug adapter, unless they are dual-voltage.

INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS: No special vaccinations are generally required for travellers arriving from the United States. Routine vaccinations should be up to date. Hepatitis A and Typhoid vaccinations may be recommended depending on individual circumstances, travel plans and activities. Medical advice should be obtained before departure.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: Hong Kong observes a number of statutory and general holidays, including New Year's Day, Lunar New Year's Day and the following Lunar New Year holidays, Ching Ming Festival, Labour Day May 1st, Birthday of the Buddha, Tuen Ng Festival, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day July 1st, the day following the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, National Day October 1st, Chung Yeung Festival, Christmas Day and the first weekday after Christmas Day. Easter holidays and other holidays are also observed. Dates for Lunar-calendar holidays vary each year.

OFFICE HOURS: Office hours vary by employer and industry. Many businesses operate approximately 9.00am to 5.00pm or 6.00pm Monday to Friday, although longer hours and Saturday working are common in some sectors.

BANK HOURS: Banking hours vary by bank and branch. Many branches operate Monday to Friday during standard business hours, with some branches also offering Saturday opening.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 999 – Police, Ambulance and Fire.

U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL HONG KONG & MACAU:

U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong & Macau 26 Garden Road Central, Hong Kong Telephone: +852 2841 2211

The U.S. Consulate General provides consular services and assistance to U.S. citizens in Hong Kong and Macau, as well as U.S. visa services and other official U.S. government services.

U.S. citizens in Hong Kong should use the official U.S. Department of State and U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong & Macau websites for current information, appointments and emergency assistance.

Part 1 – Background Information on Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of China

Background

Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. It is situated on China's southern coast and has developed into a major international centre for finance, trade, business, logistics and professional services.

Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain in 1842 following the First Opium War. Kowloon and the New Territories subsequently came under British administration. Hong Kong remained under British administration until July 1st 1997, when sovereignty was transferred to the People's Republic of China under the framework of the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Under the Basic Law, Hong Kong maintains a separate legal and economic system from mainland China under the principle of "one country, two systems". The Hong Kong SAR Government is responsible for most domestic affairs, while defence and foreign affairs are the responsibility of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China.

Hong Kong continues to be an important international business and financial centre and an important gateway for trade and investment involving mainland China.

Geography

Hong Kong is situated on the southern coast of China, bordering the South China Sea.

The territory consists of Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories and more than 200 outlying islands.

Despite its relatively small geographical area, Hong Kong has a highly developed transport network and a densely populated urban core. Much of the territory outside the main urban areas consists of hills, country parks and protected countryside.

Climate

Hong Kong has a subtropical climate.

Summers are generally hot, humid and rainy, with occasional typhoons. Winters are usually cooler and drier. Spring and autumn can be warm and humid, with changing weather conditions.

Typhoons and heavy rainfall can occasionally disrupt transport, schools, businesses and other services.

Economy

Hong Kong has a highly developed and internationally connected economy.

Major sectors include financial services, professional services, trading and logistics, tourism, retail, technology and business services.

Hong Kong's economy is closely integrated with mainland China and plays an important role in international trade and investment.

The Hong Kong dollar is linked to the U.S. dollar within a managed exchange-rate system.

Population

Hong Kong has a population of approximately 7.5 million people, concentrated mainly in the urban areas of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories.

The population is ethnically and culturally diverse, with substantial expatriate and international communities.

Language

Chinese and English are the official languages of Hong Kong.

Cantonese is widely spoken, while Mandarin (Putonghua) is also increasingly common. English is widely used in government, business, education, law and professional services.

Religion

Hong Kong has a diverse religious population. Buddhism, Taoism, Confucian traditions and Christianity are widely represented, together with Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and other faiths.

Education

Hong Kong has a well-developed education system with government-funded schools, aided schools, private schools and international schools.

International schools provide a range of overseas curricula, including British, American, International Baccalaureate and other international programmes.

Parents relocating from the United States should investigate school admissions well in advance, as places at popular international schools can be limited.

Healthcare

Hong Kong has both public and private healthcare systems.

Public healthcare is heavily subsidised for eligible residents, while private healthcare is also widely available. Private hospitals and clinics generally offer a wide range of medical services and are commonly used by expatriates and international residents.

U.S. citizens relocating to Hong Kong should ensure they have appropriate international or private health insurance before moving, particularly where private medical care is preferred.

Currency

The currency is the Hong Kong dollar (HKD/HK\$), divided into 100 cents.

Banknotes are issued in denominations including HK\$10, HK\$20, HK\$50, HK\$100, HK\$500 and HK\$1,000.

Coins include 10 cents, 20 cents, 50 cents, HK\$1, HK\$2, HK\$5 and HK\$10.

Major credit and debit cards are widely accepted, although cash remains useful for smaller businesses and some local transactions.

Utilities

Hong Kong's electricity supply is 220v AC, 50Hz.

U.S. electrical appliances designed solely for 110–120v will generally require a step-up transformer or suitable voltage converter. A simple plug adapter only changes the physical shape of the plug and does not change voltage.

Many modern electronic devices, including laptops, phones and chargers, are dual-voltage. Equipment labelled "100–240v, 50/60Hz" can generally be used with an appropriate plug adapter.

U.S. residents should check the electrical rating of appliances before including them in a household goods shipment.

Television and Electronics

U.S. television equipment may not be directly compatible with Hong Kong broadcasting standards and services.

Modern streaming devices and computers are generally easier to use internationally, but compatibility, power requirements and regional service restrictions should be checked before shipment.

Part 2 – Hong Kong Import Customs Regulations

The following information provides general guidance regarding the importation of household goods and personal effects into Hong Kong.

Import requirements can change and may vary according to the type of goods, their value, the importer's circumstances and whether the goods are for personal or commercial use.

A professional customs agent or relocation company should be consulted before shipping.

Household Goods and Personal Effects

Hong Kong generally does not impose customs duty on ordinary imported household goods because Hong Kong is a free port.

However, certain goods are controlled, restricted or subject to licensing requirements. Customs may inspect shipments and documentation where necessary.

A detailed inventory should be prepared before shipment.

The inventory should clearly describe the contents rather than using vague descriptions such as "miscellaneous", "clothing" or "electrical appliances".

Typical documentation may include:

- Detailed packing inventory.
- Copy of passport.
- Shipping documentation.
- Import declaration where applicable.
- Any required licences or permits.
- Supporting documentation for restricted or controlled goods.

Diplomatic Shipments

Diplomatic personnel and eligible diplomatic missions may benefit from specific exemptions or privileges.

Documentation and procedures depend on diplomatic status and the arrangements applicable to the individual or mission.

Diplomatic shipments should be coordinated with the relevant embassy or consulate and Hong Kong authorities before shipment.

Motor Vehicles

The importation and registration of private vehicles in Hong Kong are subject to strict requirements.

Vehicles must comply with Hong Kong safety, emissions and technical standards and may require inspection and approval before registration.

Import duties and first-registration tax can make privately importing a vehicle expensive. Insurance and registration requirements should also be investigated before shipping.

Vehicles imported into Hong Kong may be subject to substantial taxes and fees depending on the type and value of the vehicle.

It is strongly recommended that a full estimate of import, tax, registration, inspection and compliance costs is obtained before shipping a vehicle.

Alcohol and Tobacco

Hong Kong has a relatively liberal duty regime, but certain commodities remain subject to excise duties and specific import requirements.

Alcoholic beverages and tobacco products should be checked before shipment because requirements vary according to the type and quantity of goods.

A detailed inventory should include the type of alcohol, bottle size, quantity, alcohol strength and value where applicable.

Firearms, Weapons and Dangerous Goods

Firearms, ammunition, weapons, explosives and other controlled or dangerous goods are subject to strict controls.

Do not include firearms, ammunition, explosives or other potentially prohibited or restricted weapons in a household goods shipment without obtaining specialist advice and all required licences in advance.

Certain knives and other weapons may also be controlled.

Plants and Plant Products

Plants, seeds, soil and other plant products may be subject to quarantine and import controls.

Do not include plants, soil or plant material in a household goods shipment without first checking the applicable Hong Kong requirements.

Food Items

Small quantities of certain food products may be imported for personal use, but food products are subject to Hong Kong's import and food-safety regulations.

Meat, poultry, animal products, dairy products, fresh produce and other perishable foods may be subject to additional requirements.

For a household goods shipment, it is generally advisable to avoid including food unless the import requirements have been confirmed in advance.

Pharmaceuticals and Medicines

Medicines and pharmaceutical products may be subject to import controls.

U.S. residents should carry prescription medicines in their original packaging and retain appropriate prescriptions or supporting documentation.

Controlled drugs and certain pharmaceutical products may require prior approval or may be prohibited.

Prohibited and Restricted Items

Restrictions may apply to:

- Narcotics and controlled drugs.
- Firearms and ammunition.
- Explosives and dangerous goods.
- Certain weapons and knives.
- Plants, seeds and soil.
- Certain animal products.
- Endangered species and wildlife products.
- Certain medicines and pharmaceutical products.
- Counterfeit goods.
- Other items controlled under Hong Kong legislation.

Because regulations vary by product, all unusual, valuable or potentially restricted items should be checked before packing.

Pets

Dogs, cats and other animals can be imported into Hong Kong subject to specific animal-health, quarantine and documentation requirements.

Requirements vary according to the country or place of origin and the type of animal.

Pet owners should begin the process well before departure, as vaccinations, health certificates, permits and quarantine arrangements may be required.

The Hong Kong Government's current requirements should be checked before travelling.

Endangered Species and CITES

Hong Kong regulates the import and export of endangered species and products made from protected animals and plants under CITES and local legislation.

Items such as ivory, certain skins, furs, feathers, coral and other wildlife products may require permits or may be prohibited.

Old pianos and antiques can sometimes contain ivory components. Specialist advice should therefore be obtained before including such items in a shipment.

Fumigation and Wooden Packing Materials

Wooden packing materials used for international shipments may be subject to phytosanitary requirements.

Wood packaging such as crates, pallets and dunnage should comply with applicable ISPM 15 requirements, including appropriate treatment and marking where required.

The moving company and packing contractor should ensure that all wooden packing materials meet the current requirements of the destination country before shipment.

Disclaimer

Although every care is taken to ensure that the information in this Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date, One Way America cannot accept liability for any inaccuracies, omissions or changes in Hong Kong law or regulations.

Import, customs, immigration, health, pet, vehicle and quarantine requirements can change. Readers should confirm current requirements with the relevant Hong Kong authorities before making travel arrangements or shipping household goods.

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