



Global Immigration alert

December 2024

China Mainland

New digital, combined work permit and social security card introduced

Executive summary

Effective 1 December 2024, foreign nationals working in the Chinese mainland began receiving a single electronic document that includes both work authorization and social security details.

Key developments

Previously, foreign workers were required to apply for work permit cards before they could start working in the Chinese mainland. This document was issued in physical form. Social security cards are available in both physical and electronic forms, but it was not mandatory for foreign workers to apply for this document.

Under the new rules, individuals who apply for a first-time work permit are being issued a digital document that includes both their work authorization details as well as social security information. Holders can review their work authorization information and access social security benefits (e.g., healthcare, pension) through these digital cards, which can be accessed on mobile phones or computers.

Individuals who already hold valid work permit cards can continue using these documents to work and reside in the Chinese mainland until their expiry. These individuals are not required to apply for a replacement of their current physical cards, unless their personal information or employment details change. However, they can choose to apply for a replacement if they wish to access their work authorization and social security details online. If current holders of work permit cards intend to continue

working in the Chinese mainland after the expiry of their permit, they must apply for the new digital document.

Foreign nationals who seek to obtain or renew their residence authorization will be subject to requirements based on where they reside. For example, individuals working in Guangzhou must apply for the new digital card before they can apply for residence authorization.

Impact on employers

This development is expected to benefit employers by eliminating the issuance of physical work permit cards and streamlining the immigration authorization verification process for foreign workers. Companies may review their current workforce and social security policies and ensure their employees are compliant with all regulations.

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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