

Hong Kong Investment Guidebook

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Setting up in HK

Every investor has a wide range of business vehicles to choose from when doing business in Hong Kong. All enterprises are subject to the same rules.

Requirements for establishing a business in Hong Kong are famous for being simple and straight forward. You can set up a new company in six days and it will cost you only a few hundred US dollars!

The type of structure that is most appropriate will depend on tax issues, strategic plans, financial aspects, willingness to take on ongoing obligations and much more. Because of the complex and long term impact of this decision, it is advisable to seek professional advice.

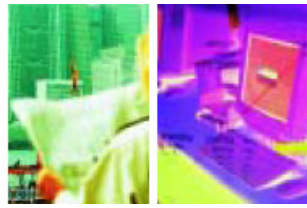
The most common forms of business vehicles foreign investors choose are:

- Private limited companies
- Branch offices of overseas companies
- Rep offices
- Partnerships/sole proprietorships
- Joint ventures

A must for all business vehicles

- Business Registration Certificate





Private Limited Companies

A foreign company may wish to incorporate a wholly-owned Hong Kong company as a subsidiary. Companies incorporated in Hong Kong may be public or private and may be limited by shares or by guarantee. The vast majority of companies in Hong Kong are private companies limited by shares.

Nature and key conditions of a private company limited by shares

Company name - Must be unique and must not include certain restricted words. It may be in English or Chinese or both.

Share capital - No minimum or maximum share capital.

Shareholders - There may be anything between one and 50 shareholders. The liability of each shareholder is limited to the share capital they have invested.

Registered office - A company must have a registered office address in Hong Kong. This serves as the company's legal address for notices and proceedings and can be different from the business address.

Directors - One is sufficient unless the company is part of a listed group. Directors may be individuals or corporations of any nationality, domicile and residence.

Company secretary - The company, however, must appoint a company secretary (to ensure compliance with ongoing legal returns, accounts, audit and other requirements) who must be resident in Hong Kong.

Registration - A company is incorporated by submitting the necessary paperwork and fee to the Registrar of Companies.

Tax - Profits tax is payable on profits generated in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, many items are tax deductible.

Process and cost of incorporating a private limited company

Investors may engage advisers to help with this process:

Step 1 - check availability of company name at Companies Registry

Step 2 - submit the following to the Registrar of Companies:

- A signed copy of the company's Memorandum and Articles of Association (which contain specific internal regulations constituting of a contract between the shareholders and the company)
- A "Statement of Compliance on Incorporation" in a specified form (Form NC1A)
- The prescribed fee of HK\$1,720 plus capital duty of HK\$1 for every HK\$1,000 of share capital up to a maximum of HK\$30,000. A portion of this will be refunded if applications are unsuccessful.

The Companies Registry will then issue a certificate of incorporation certifying the name and date of incorporation of the company ie the date the company came into legal existence.

Step 3 - within one month, submit application and fee for Business Registration Certificate (cost HK \$2,600 for one year) (Click [here](#) for more).

It can take as few as 6 working days to process documents and issue a certificate of incorporation.



Note, since early 2005 many of the above documents can be filed electronically with the Registrar. If so, different charges apply.

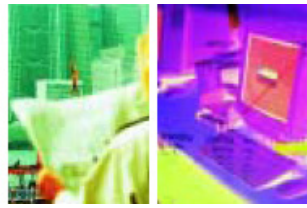
Alternatives to incorporating a company

- Buy a company off the shelf ie a ready made company that is already incorporated but is dormant. There are many agencies who provide this service. Shelf companies provide an immediate solution although if you are required to change the company name and specific provisions in its constitution, it will take longer.
- Purchase of an existing business. The acquiring enterprise can either buy the assets which make up the business or buy the shares of the company owning the assets. Although potentially

complex to negotiate, buying a business is a quick way to meet the qualification criteria for companies to enjoy the preferential export terms to the Mainland afforded by the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement. (CEPA) For more click [here](#).

Related Links

-  Business Registration Certificate
-  CEPA



Business Registration

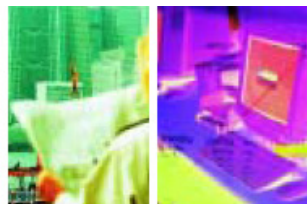
The certificate costs HK\$2,600, must be renewed annually and is processed in 30 minutes over the counter or in 2 working days by post. The certificate is issued by the Inland Revenue Department.

One application form is all that is required to obtain the Business Registration Certificate. As an alternative to annual renewal, enterprises may apply for a certificate that lasts 3 years for which special rates apply.

For more information from the Inland Revenue Department about Business Registration Certificates, click [here](#).

Related Links

-  [Inland Revenue Department](#)



Representative Offices

Like a branch, this is a means by which a company incorporated outside Hong Kong establishes a place of business in Hong Kong. A representative office can only however fulfil a limited range of functions. "Rep offices" are particularly useful for foreign companies that wish to analyse the Hong Kong market before making a bigger investment in the city.

Nature and key conditions of a representative office

Functions - Whereas a branch and subsidiary can conduct full operations, a representative office may only collect information or maintain contacts with customers, so-called promotional and liaison work. A representative office cannot enter into contracts, except for renting office space and for utilities.

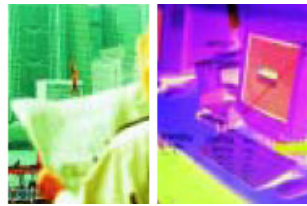
Business in Hong Kong - A representative office is prohibited from carrying on any business in Hong Kong. If it does, it is required to register as a branch (see above). *Registration* - No registration requirements are required for a representative office.

Tax - since a representative office cannot undertake business in Hong Kong, it should not generate any profits.

Process and cost of incorporating a representative office

Step 1 - within one month, submit application and fee for Business Registration Certificate (cost HK \$2,600 for one year) (click [here](#) for more).

No further registration or filing is required.



Partnerships/Sole Proprietorships

These bodies do not have a separate legal entity, therefore the sole proprietor or partners are personally liable for the debts and liabilities of the business. In the case of limited partnerships (which are rare), liability is limited for only some of the partners.

Nature and key conditions of a partnerships/sole proprietorship

Liability - The sole proprietor or partners have unlimited liability for the debts and liabilities of the business ie their personal assets could be at risk.

Partnerships - Unlike corporate vehicles, partnerships do not have continual existence and the maximum number of partners allowed is usually 20. Partnerships are usually governed by a partnership agreement; if an agreement is not in place, the partnership legislation is deemed to apply.

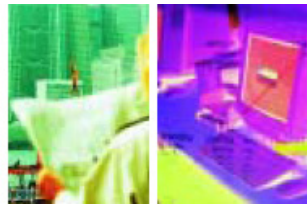
Tax - Tax treatments differ between corporate vehicles and partnerships/sole proprietorships.

Ongoing compliance - Ongoing requirements are less onerous for partnerships/sole proprietorships than for corporate vehicles.

Process and cost of establishing a partnerships/sole proprietorship

Step 1 - Within one month, submit application and fee for Business Registration Certificate (cost HK \$2,600 for one year).

Since no further registration, filing or procedures are required, a partnership is quick and cheap to form.



Joint Ventures

Joint ventures (JVs) are created when two or more JV partners want to undertake business together. Each JV partner will contribute certain resources in return for shares and/or a percentage of profits.

Nature and key conditions of a joint venture

Business vehicle - Normally a private limited liability company is established to conduct the JV venture business.

Process and cost of establishing a joint venture

Once the JV partners have established an agreement on the terms of the joint venture setting out the contributions and rights, the company can be incorporated in the usual way. See [Private Limited Companies](#).

Related Links

- Private Limited Companies



Branch Offices of Parent Companies

Where a company incorporated outside Hong Kong establishes a place of business or branch office in Hong Kong as an extension of the investing company, it is referred to as an "overseas company". Unlike a subsidiary, a branch can leverage off the credit rating and more of the overseas owner. The key differences between a branch and a representative office are the operating scope and tax treatment.

Nature and key conditions of a branch office

Branch - is an address where the overseas company itself carries on business.

Legal and tax treatment - Such branch offices are generally subject to the same legal and tax consequences as companies incorporated in Hong Kong.

Registration - overseas companies must register their branch with the Registrar of Companies.

Ongoing compliance - Branches are legally required to file returns, audited accounts and more, on an ongoing basis

Process and cost of establishing a branch office

The overseas company must apply for registration within one month of establishing a business in Hong Kong. It is advisable to apply before business commences.

Step 1 - Submit the undernoted to the Registrar of Companies:

- A certified copy of the instrument defining a company's constitution.
- A completed Form F1 (available for sale at the Companies Registry) which includes particulars of the company's directors, secretary and company's authorised representative in Hong Kong, the principal place of business in Hong Kong and in the place of incorporation.
- A certified copy of the company's certificate of incorporation.
- A certified copy of the latest accounts of the company may be required.
- An application fee of HK\$1,720 and a fee of HK\$20 for registration of each document.

Step 2 - within one month, submit application and fee for Business Registration Certificate (cost HK \$2,600 for one year) ([click here for more](#)).

It normally takes 22 working days to process documents and issue a certificate of registration.

The Economy

In General

Hong Kong is one of the most open and externally oriented economies of the world. The city prospers as a trading hub and service centre, where an understanding of international markets as well as the Mainland give it a unique and versatile economic role as the Mainland opens up.

The economy is robust enough to have weathered the economic shockwaves and recover to new heights. Over the past two decades, the Hong Kong economy has more than doubled in size with GDP growing at an average annual rate of 5% in real terms.

Since land supply is tightly controlled, the property market is often regarded as an indicator of the economy's health. With increases on the horizon, this is widely regarded as an economic positive. Unemployment has stabilised at around 6.5% and the composite price index is now hovering around positive.



Business Environment and Culture

Hong Kong prides itself in the 'little government, big market' approach, where the comparatively light hand of regulatory bodies ensures Hong Kong remains of world-class standard while providing the pro-business framework that creates a just and level playing field. The government lives by the mantra "market leads, government facilitates".

With next to no natural assets, the primary economic sector is negligible in terms of contribution to GDP and employment. In the last 20 or so years, GDP constituents have changed from 69% services and 30% manufacturing to 88% services and 12% manufacturing. This testifies to Hong Kong and its inhabitants being widely renowned for their ability to adapt and reinvent. Now that manufacturing has moved over the border to the Mainland, Hong Kong is embracing its role of manager, financier, marketer, logistics organiser, trader and in tourism, the key industries which now comprise the majority of GDP and employment.

Trade

Trade in goods and services expanded by around eight times and three times respectively in the last 20 years. Looking at the total value of the trade of goods and services, it amounts to more than 300% of GDP!

In approximate terms, Hong Kong's total trade comprises roughly half imports and half exports, of the latter, re-exports form the lion's share. Key markets for Hong Kong are the US and the Mainland.

Since the economic reforms introduced by the Mainland in 1978, business between Hong Kong and the Mainland has increased significantly, with Hong Kong handling more than 20% of the Mainland's foreign trade.

There are various bodies such as the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Hong Kong Productivity Council that help Hong Kong businesses trade and stay competitive in the world market. The Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce also plays a key role in this. It is one of the largest voluntary chambers in the world.

Investment

According to the latest World Investment Report 2004 (from the United Nations), Hong Kong was the second largest recipient of foreign investment in Asia (Mainland was the first) and was the 11th largest recipient in the world.

In the same report Hong Kong was recognised as one of the leading locations in the "Inward FDI Performance Index" (ranked 9th in the global rankings); 12th in the global rankings for "Inward FDI Potential Index" and was classified as a "front-runner" economy, meaning the city out performed its investment potential, by attracting high FDI inflows relative to its economic size.

Like trade, Hong Kong and the Mainland are key to one another's success. Hong Kong is the largest investor in the Mainland, and Mainland investment in Hong Kong amounts to some 2,000 enterprises and over 25% of the total stock.

Other Aspects of Commerce

Related Links

- ☰ [Monthly economic and trade summary](#)
- ☰ [GDP](#)
- ☰ [Other key economic statistics](#)
- ☰ [Outlook for Hong Kong economy in 2005](#)
- ☰ [Medium term outlook for Hong Kong economy](#)
- ☰ [Hong Kong Trade Development Council](#)
- ☰ [Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce](#)
- ☰ [Hong Kong Productivity Council](#)



Other Aspects of Commerce

There are two main vehicles through which Hong Kong maintains its world class corporate governance standards.

- The Hong Kong Institute of Company Secretaries is the independent professional body that promotes its some 5,000 members in the implementation and formulating of good and effective corporate governance policies in Hong Kong and mainland China. <http://www.hkics.org.hk/>
- The Hong Kong Institute of Company Directors is a membership association that aims to promote good corporate governance.
<http://www.hkiod.com/eng/main.html>

Corruption

The Hong Kong government has zero tolerance for corruption. To achieve this, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was set up in 1974 to investigate, prevent and educate in the fight against corruption. With the support of the Government and the community, Hong Kong has now become one of the least corrupt places in the world. For more information go to [ICAC website](#)

Corporate Social Responsibility

Businesses in Hong Kong are increasingly taking more notice of their need to be socially responsible. The Hong Kong Council of Social Service have established a "Caring Company" accreditation for companies who meet their criteria for good corporate citizenship. Large MNCs and small local enterprises alike are helping instill this ethos broadly across commerce in the city. For more information go to <http://www.hkcss.org.hk/caringcom/index.htm>

Networking

Hong Kong's resident business population is quite small and the community is quite intimate. You will have quite ready access to senior levels of commerce. It is probably for this reason that networking works particularly well in Hong Kong. Informal meetings and seminars at breakfast, lunch and dinner are commonplace. Never go to a social function or meeting without your name cards!

Related Links

- 📖 The Hong Kong Institute of Company Secretaries
- 📖 The Hong Kong Institute of Company Directors
- 📖 ICAC
- 📖 Corporate social responsibility



- › Political Framework
- › Intellectual Property Protection
- › Taxation
- › Legal
- › Trade Regulations

IP, Taxation and Regulations

Hong Kong's level playing field and transparent world-class framework is legendary. Indeed it is consistently recognised as a major strength in independent rankings and by overseas investors who have already committed to the city.

The Government operates by the mantra "market leads, Government facilitates" which has resulted in an efficient system whereby there is minimal red tape and maximum effectiveness.

There are various factors that contribute to Hong Kong's business environment:

- Political framework
- Intellectual Property Protection
- Taxation
- Legal
- Trade regulations





Political Framework

Since reunification with China in 1997, Hong Kong's mini-constitution called The Basic Law, has allowed the city's entrepreneurial spirit to continue to flourish.

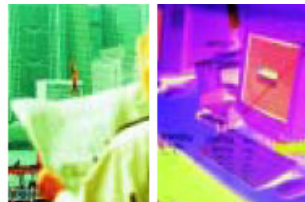
Guided by the overall ethos of 'one country, two systems' as prescribed in that document, Hong Kong has the autonomy and the framework to continue to enjoy the free market characteristics that have been critical to city's success and identity.

For example, the city has a separate legal system to the Mainland, and negotiates and signs its own economic agreements, while also being an integral part of China.

This capitalist system and lifestyle will remain unchanged for fifty years, until 2047, when the basic law will expire.

Related Links

 [Basic Law](#)



Intellectual Property Protection

Hong Kong has comprehensive laws for the protection of intellectual property (IP), which conform to all the major international IP conventions. They are commensurate with its status as a developed economy, and an international trading and financial centre. The framework is intended to encourage creativity and ensure that creators enjoy the fruits of their innovations.

The Basic Law (Hong Kong's mini-constitution) holds the Hong Kong government responsible for formulating its own policies and laws on IP rights. The laws do not distinguish between residents of Hong Kong and foreign entities. Hong Kong's key laws protecting IP are in full compliance with the standards laid down in Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

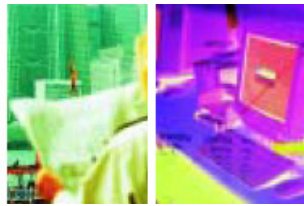
The Intellectual Property Department monitors the IP regime and ensures enforcement. It investigates complaints against infringements and has extensive powers of search and seizure.

There are a number of options affording protection, depending on the item to be protected:

- [Patents](#)
- [Trade marks](#)
- [Copyright](#)
- [Registered designs](#)

Related Links

- 📄 [Intellectual Property Department](#)



Patents

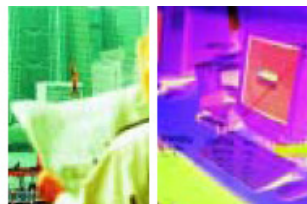
Patents in Hong Kong are protected by the Patents Ordinance (Chapter 514 of Laws of Hong Kong) which is territorial and only protects patents in Hong Kong. Applying for a patent elsewhere in the world or in other regions of China does not automatically give you protection in Hong Kong.

To qualify for registration, the invention must be new, involve an inventive step and be capable of industrial application.

Once registered a patent may be freely assigned or licensed.

Related Links

-  [Patents information from Hong Kong Government](#)



Trade Marks

Marks or logos that are capable of distinguishing goods or services may be registered under the Trade Marks Ordinance (Chapter 43 of the Laws of Hong Kong). Certain marks will be refused if they are misleading or deceptive.

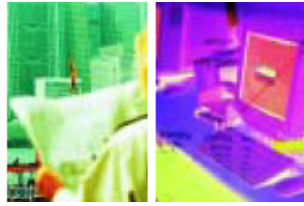
A certain amount of protection is afforded to unregistered trade marks under the common law.

The owner of the trade mark has an exclusive right to use the mark on his/her goods or services, and can take legal action against anyone using the mark without the owners consent.

Anyone fraudulently using a trade mark, including selling and importing goods bearing a forged trademark, or possessing or using equipment for the purpose of making or applying a forged trade mark to goods, commits a criminal offence.

Related Links

-  [Trade mark information from Hong Kong Government](#)



Copyright

In order to be protected by copyright law, a work or performance must be original, recorded, be one of the categories stipulated in the Copyright Ordinance (Chapter 528 of the Laws of Hong Kong) and be connected to Hong Kong.

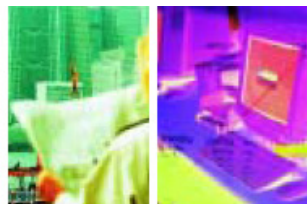
If a copyright exists in a subject matter, the protection is automatic. No registration is required, even if that work or performance originates from anywhere in the world.

Hong Kong has specific legislation to protect the layout of integrated circuits. Since protection is automatic and there is no need to register the layout-design, it is similar in nature to copyright protection.

Recent copyright legislation has given the Government wider powers to clamp down on corporations using pirated software in their daily operations. The Government are clearly monitoring legislation requirements to ensure IP rights are protected.

Related Links

-  [Copyright information from Hong Kong Government](#)



Registered Designs

A registrable design includes features of shape, configuration, pattern or ornament applied to an article by any industrial process. It affects only the outward appearance of an article which must have aesthetic appeal and must be new.

The Registered Design Ordinance (Chapter 522 of the Laws of Hong Kong) establishes an independent designs registry in Hong Kong. Registration is for a total of 25 years, subject to renewal every five years. Registered designs have concurrent protection under copyright law for 25 years.

Registered designs can be freely assigned and licensed.

Registration does not protect functional features of a design - these are protected under patent law if the features are novel and inventive.

Related Links

-  [Registered design information from Hong Kong Government](#)

Taxation

Hong Kong's simple and low tax system is a great attraction to foreign investors. This low fiscal burden for all, domestic or international players, corporates and individuals alike makes Hong Kong attractive.

In fact low tax is the most cited reason for regional offices to set up in Hong Kong! The narrow tax base and the low rates give Hong Kong one of the lowest tax incidences in virtually all other developed economies.

Hong Kong operates a territorial basis of taxation under which taxes are only imposed on profits or income with a Hong Kong source. Foreign-sourced income is not taxable even if remitted to Hong Kong.

The Inland Revenue Department is responsible for tax matters in Hong Kong. Hong Kong has a different tax regime and is treated as completely separate to the Mainland of China.

Hong Kong's fiscal year runs from 1 April to 31 March.

The principal direct taxes are profits tax on business profits, salaries tax on salaries and property tax on income from property.

Hong Kong does not have any capital gains tax, withholding tax in dividends and interest, inheritance tax, value added tax and collection of social security contributions. Few items attract duty.

The following are broad insights into Hong Kong's main direct taxes:

- [Profits tax](#)
- [Salaries tax](#)
- [Property tax](#)
- [Double taxation agreements](#)

Related Links

- 📄 [Overview of Hong Kong tax including tax rates](#)



Profits Tax

Profits tax is charged only on net profits arising in or deriving from Hong Kong, from a trade, profession or business carried on in Hong Kong.

Incorporated and unincorporated businesses are taxed at different rates - incorporated businesses at 17.5% and unincorporated at 16%.

Profits tax is paid initially on the basis of profits made in the year preceding the year of assessment and is subsequently adjusted according to profits actually made in the assessment year. The fiscal year in Hong Kong runs from 1 April to 31 March.

Some general details in calculating profits tax:

- deductible items include:
 - all expenses incurred in the production of assessable profits
 - losses of the company (can also be carried forward indefinitely)
 - capital allowances on capital expenditure (varying between 4-20%) and plant and machinery, up to an immediate write off of 100%
 - certain trademark and patent registration fees
 - contributions to an employee retirement scheme, up to specified limits
 - some costs attributable to scientific research
- items exempt from profits tax
 - interest income, other than that received by financial institutions, and dividends received from corporations
 - capital gains
- there is no withholding tax on dividends paid by corporations
- groups cannot file a consolidated tax return in Hong Kong

Profits tax produces about 20% of the Government's revenue.

Related Links

- ☰ [Profits tax information from Hong Kong Government](#)



Salaries Tax

Salaries tax is charged on emoluments arising in or derived from Hong Kong. The basis of assessment and method of payment (including provisional payments) are similar to the system for profits tax.

Taxpayers receive their salary gross ie the tax is not deducted. Salaries tax is demanded on a yearly basis, and is normally paid in two instalments between December and March. Employees must remember to save their tax in preparation for this bill!

Foreign nationals who spend less than 60 days in Hong Kong in any year of assessment are exempt from salaries tax.

Employers will register new employees with the authorities so that the tax authorities should automatically be notified when a new tax subject is around.

Taxable income includes:

- commissions
- bonuses
- awards
- gratuities
- allowances, like housing allowance

Deductions include: allowances prescribed in the Ordinance, charitable donations and certain payments for relevant educational courses.

The earnings of husbands and wives are reported and assessed separately. However they may elect to be assessed jointly if this results in a lower tax bill or if allowances are unused.

Salaries tax is calculated in two ways and the taxpayer pays the lesser amount. The two methods are:

- tax calculated at a stepped rate on the net income figure ie after tax allowances. The stepped rates are: 2% on the first HK\$30,000; 8% on the next HK\$30,000; 14% on the next HK\$30,000 and the balance at 20%.
- tax calculated at the standard rate (16%) applied to the gross income figure.

Only around 40% of the workforce has to pay salaries tax

Related Links

-  Salaries Tax information from the Hong Kong Government



Property Tax

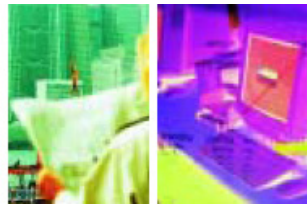
Property tax is charged at a standard rate of 16% on rentals received less rates and an allowance of 20% for repairs and maintenance.

Again the system of provisional payment of tax is similar to that for profits tax and salaries tax.

For corporations, rental income is included in their profits tax calculations so they are not subject to property tax.

Related Links

- [Property tax information from the Hong Kong Government](#)



Double Taxation

Hong Kong's tax basis is territorial, therefore income derived by a resident from places outside Hong Kong will generally not face double taxation in Hong Kong.

Many countries which tax their residents on a world-wide basis also provide their residents who operate businesses in Hong Kong with unilateral tax relief for Hong Kong tax paid on income derived from Hong Kong.

Hong Kong also allows a deduction for foreign tax paid on turnover basis in respect of an income which is also subject to tax in Hong Kong. Businesses operating in Hong Kong therefore do not generally have problems with double taxation of income.

Hong Kong does however have two comprehensive double tax agreements.

Hong Kong signed a tax treaty with mainland China to eliminate double taxation between the city and the Mainland. This is yet another example of the cross border agreements that are being developed to strengthen links between the two economies.

Hong Kong also signed the Comprehensive Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with Belgium. This is the first agreement affecting all types of income between Hong Kong and a foreign jurisdiction.

Hong Kong has double tax arrangements for shipping and airline income with a number of countries.

Related Links

-  [Double tax information from the Hong Kong Government](#)

Legal

The legal system of Hong Kong is based on the rule of law and the independence of the Judiciary. Under the principle of 'one country, two systems', Hong Kong's legal system differs from that of the Mainland, and is based on the common law.

The constitutional framework for the legal system was agreed before the handover and guarantees the continuance of the legal system that was in place before China resumed sovereignty over Hong Kong on 1 July 1997. For example nearly all the 600 or so laws (so-called Ordinances) were carried forward after the handover and the court and tribunal system were re-established under the new constitution, all be it with some name changes.

The law in Hong Kong comprises laws in the Basic Law (Hong Kong's post 1997 mini-constitution), those that have been adopted or enacted locally, as well as a few national laws, that relate to defence and foreign affairs. All ordinances in force are available in Chinese and English.

Besides [the basic business vehicle requirements prescribed by law](#), other major legal issues are:

- [dispute resolution](#)
- [environmental](#)

Related Links

- 📄 [Basic business vehicle requirements prescribed by law](#)



Dispute Resolution

There are several ways of solving disputes in Hong Kong. In fact the city is recognised as one of the world's leading arbitration centres.

The key methods are:

- arbitration
- litigation
- mediation

Arbitration

Arbitration is a popular means of solving disputes in Hong Kong and has been actively pursued by the Government. It is governed by the Arbitration Ordinance, which has two distinct regimes

1. a domestic regime derived from English Law
2. an international regime which reflects the model law adopted by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

The Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre operates a panel of international and local arbitrators who can assist parties choose the best means of resolving disputes as well as provide other support services.

The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators are involved in developing and managing the industry. This has made Hong Kong a popular choice for commercial, shipping and building arbitrations.

Litigation




Litigation in the courts of Hong Kong is similar to that in England and the Commonwealth. It is an adversarial common law system, broadly with three tiers:

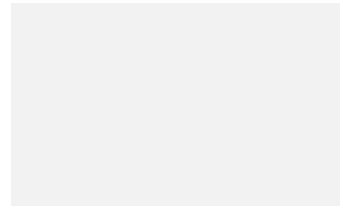
1. Small Claims Tribunal - typically used for disputes over sums of money and other claims up to the value of HK\$50,000.
2. District Court - where unlike the Small Claims Tribunal, legal representatives are allowed. Where cases involve amounts over HK\$1 million, they are heard at the Court of First Instance.
3. High Court - can hear cases involving any monetary amount and has specialist judges to deal with complex matters.

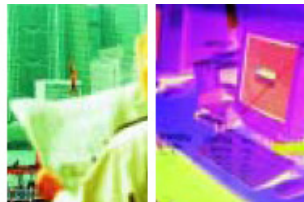
Mediation

Mediation is growing more popular as an alternative to litigation or arbitration. The Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre also promotes mediation, by for example, training mediators and keeping a register of accredited mediators.

Related Links

-  [Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre](#)
-  [Chartered Institute of Arbitrators](#)
-  [Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators](#)
-  [Judiciary](#)





Environmental

The concentration of population and economic activities in a relatively small land area leads to pressures on the environment.

As the business community and populace in general is becoming more aware of the long term impact of their short term decisions, protecting the environmental, reducing waste and encouraging sustainable development are featuring on more and higher up on agendas.

The government is investing resources to improve all aspects of the environment and encourage good practice through public education campaigns and incentivising change. An over-riding principal in recent initiatives is "make polluters pay".




The Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance provides the legal framework for the conduct of environmental impact assessments on projects and the implementation of specific environmental measures.

There are no legal requirements for private corporations to publish reports on their environmental policies and actions, but the Environmental Protection Department does encourage such public accountability. The EPD is also key in ensuring the main pollution control legislation is implemented.

There are rules and regulations that control what is acceptable for the various elements of the environment. [Contact InvestHK](#) for more information on the requirements for air, waste, water and noise.

Recent environmental hot topics in Hong Kong include incentivising the use of liquid petroleum gas instead of diesel in taxis and buses; changing legislation to restrict the places where individuals may smoke; imposing a tax on the use of plastic bags; and cleaning up the harbour.

Related Links

-  [Contact InvestHK](#)
-  [Environmental Protection Department](#)
-  [Business Environment Council](#)

Trade Regulations

Hong Kong is a free port. The government's policy is to promote industrial development by creating a business-friendly environment and providing adequate support services.

The administration undertakes the role of facilitating commerce and industry within the framework of a free market. It maintains no tariffs and no regulatory measures impinging on international trade other than those required to discharge its international obligations or to protect health, the environment and access to high technology.

Hong Kong is a founding member of the WTO and the government is fully committed to the multilateral trading system. The government is prepared to consider negotiating free trade agreements with trading partners as long as they are fully consistent with WTO and are in Hong Kong's best interests. Hong Kong and the Mainland have set up a "Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement" the enables benefits like zero tariffs and lower market entry barriers, of certain finished goods and services exported from Hong Kong to the Mainland. For more information on CEPA, [click here](#)

The Commerce and Industry branch is responsible for the policies and strategies relating to Hong Kong's external commercial relations; and the Customs and Excise Department is responsible for enforcing various trade and control systems.

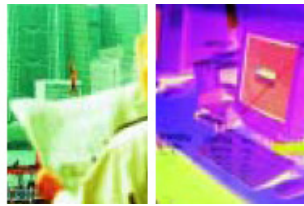
Overseas there are a number of Economic and Trade Offices that seek to promote economic, trade and investment interests among the business communities and stakeholders overseas. Contact details of these offices are [available here](#)

Significant trade regulatory aspects that have broad application include:

- [trade](#)
- [licensing](#)
- [dutiable items](#)

Related Links

- 📄 [More information on CEPA](#)
- 📄 [Contact details of overseas Economic and Trade Offices](#)



Trade




There are no customs tariffs on goods imported into Hong Kong. In general, any person who imports or exports any goods is required to lodge with the Commissioner of Customs and Excise an import/export declaration within 14 days after the importation or exportation of the goods.

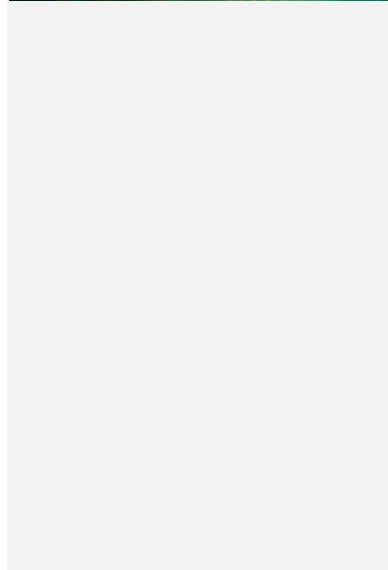
Special rules apply for other specific items, like the import of motor vehicles (on which first registration tax is payable). [Please contact us for specific guidance.](#)

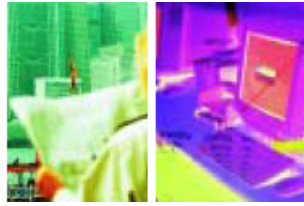
There are no significant price controls except for public transport and electricity. A few industries, like transport services and utilities are often operated under franchises awarded by the government and as such are not as freely accessible as other industries. The telecommunications market has however been opened to free competition.

The Hong Kong Trade Development Council is a statutory body that has a global network of more than 40 offices. It helps its customers, mainly local SMEs, develop marketing opportunities, trade contacts, market knowledge and competitive skills - it seeks to position Hong Kong as the trade platform of choice in Asia.

Related Links

-  [Import/export declaration to Customs and Excise](#)
-  [Hong Kong Trade Development Council](#)
-  [Virtual SME Information Centre](#)







Licensing

Although most products do not need licences to enter or leave Hong Kong, a few items are subject to strict import and export licensing control.

These include: textiles and clothing, dangerous drugs, arms and ammunition, medicines, pharmaceutical products, animals, pesticides, certain foodstuff.

These goods, among others, require special import/export licences, permits or certificates from the government in before shipment. The Trade and Industry Department oversees the licensing certification process with the assistance from the Customs and Excise Department.

Related Links

-  [Strategic Commodities Control of Trade and Industry Department](#)
-  [Business Licensing Information Service](#)



Dutiable Items

The Government collects an excise duty on only four types of goods irrespective of whether they are imported or locally manufactured, namely tobacco, hydrocarbon oil, alcoholic beverages and methyl alcohol.

The Customs and Excise Department is responsible for the collection of duties and enforcing the law.

Related Links

-  [Customs and Excise Department](#)



- › Population
- › Immigration
- › Labour and Visas
- › Education

People and Education

As a service dominated economy it is the talent of the people that very much make the economic wheels go around and cause the physical place of Hong Kong to be something altogether unique and special.

And this all starts at home, with the education and upbringing of the indigenous population. All children in Hong Kong receive nine years of free education.

Immigration rules to enter Hong Kong are very relaxed; and there are a number of ways by which someone may qualify to stay and work in the city.

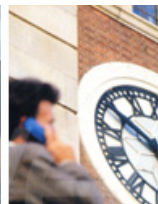
- [Population](#)
- [Immigration](#)
- [Labour and Visas](#)
- [Education](#)



It is the cosmopolitan mix of Hong Kong's inhabitants that make it such a diverse cultural environment - a melting pot of east meets west.

Related Links

- International Communities



Population

At almost 7 million, Hong Kong's population is growing. This is partly due to immigration, and partly due to the birth rate (about 7 per 1,000) exceeding the death rate (of about 5 per 1,000).

Another contributing factor is the growing life expectancy. By 2031, the life expectancy of women is projected to be 88 years, and men 82 years, making it one of the longest in the world!

Approximately 95% of Hong Kong's population is of Chinese descent. Just over half a million residents hold foreign passports, with the biggest ethnic groups being from the Philipines, Indonesia, India, USA, Canada, UK and Australia.



Hong Kong is home to almost 7 million people.



Related Links

- Population details by sex, age, growth and more



Immigration

Hong Kong is a separate travel area with autonomy over its immigration policy. The government applies immigration controls on individuals' entry into, stay in and departure from Hong Kong, including visitors from other parts of China.

The city has a liberal visa policy for visitors. People from more than 170 countries and territories may come to the city visa-free for visits ranging from seven to 180 days.

In broad terms, short-term visitors may conduct business, like negotiations and signing contracts, while entering Hong Kong on a visitor visa or entry permit.

Every adult (and child aged 11 years and above) who enters and is permitted to stay in Hong Kong for more than 180 days must apply for a Hong Kong Identity Card within 30 days of arrival. By law, you should carry this with you at all times. It is useful since it also allows you to benefit from the Government health system!



People from more than 170 countries and territories may come to the city visa-free for visits ranging from seven to 180 days.

How to get your Hong Kong Identity card

These credit card sized cards now incorporate state-of-the-art technology and include a photo, thumb prints and other personal details engraved by laser on the card. These are not suitable for international travel ie your passport is still required, even for travelling to the Mainland.

Individuals must go along in person to one of the issuing centres with a completed application form (available from Immigration Department among other locations) and specific documentation. The card is free and should be ready for collection about 10 days after application.

Not only is this card key to receive medical treatment in Hong Kong, it is also useful for signing leases, opening bank accounts and such like. By law, it should be on your person at ALL times.

For more information check out [Immigration Department](#).





- › [Employment regulations](#)
- › [Visa requirements](#)
- › [Typical benefits and terms](#)
- › [Recruiting your Hong Kong team](#)

Labour

Hong Kong's labour force is around 3.5 million. Typically unemployment is lower than other developed economies and is currently around 6.5%.

Labour relations are harmonious and there are very few days lost due to labour disputes. The Labour Department offers a conciliation service to assist achieve an amicable settlement where strikes or other forms of industrial conflicts arise. There are few labour unions in Hong Kong.

[Employment regulations](#)

[Visa requirements](#)

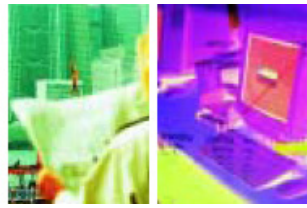
[Typical benefits and terms](#)

[Recruiting your Hong Kong team](#)



Related Links

- ☰ [Labour force, unemployment and under employment](#)
- ☰ [Employment Service of the Labour Department](#)





Employment regulations

The Employment Ordinance (Chapter 57 of the Laws of Hong Kong) sets the minimum entitlements for employees, such as statutory holidays, sick and maternity leave, severance and long-service payments.

The Occupational Safety and Health Council promotes health and safety at work through education, training, promotion, consultancy, research and information services.

Related Links

-  [Employment Ordinance \(Chapter 57 of the Laws of Hong Kong\)](#)
-  [Occupational Safety and Health Council](#)



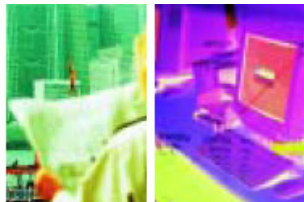
Visa requirements

Generally foreign nationals must obtain a visa before coming to Hong Kong to work, invest or remain in Hong Kong. There are three main ways you may obtain a visa and entitlement to stay in Hong Kong for the long term:

1. [obtain a work visa for employees](#)
2. [obtain a visa through investment, called the Capital Investment Entrant Scheme](#)
3. [on a dependent visa](#)

A visa is granted on condition that the applicant keeps to the original purpose of the visa when it was issued.

Employers found to have violated the labour laws in Hong Kong will be prosecuted.



Work Visa

How to obtain a work visa for your employees

Overseas nationals intending to take employment in Hong Kong must obtain a visa before they arrive.

Hong Kong maintains an open and liberal policy towards entry for employment. Foreigners who possess special skills, knowledge or experience of value to and not readily available in Hong Kong, or who are in a position to make substantial contribution to its economy are welcome to come to work in Hong Kong.

A prerequisite for an employment visa is a sponsor, namely the person or enterprise offering employment,

Applicants must complete a form (available from the Immigration Department) and send it together with the undernoted details either directly to the Hong Kong Government's Immigration Department or through the nearest Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Mission in the applicants home country.

For a visa application for employment in Hong Kong, the applicant must provide the following information:



- The name, contact address and telephone number of the applicant's employer
- Various details about the sponsor
- A copy of the applicant's service contract or letter of appointment with position title, salary and benefits
- A full description of role
- Details and proof of the applicants academic qualifications and experience relevant to the post
- A letter ideally with proof from the applicant's employer stating why the post cannot be filled locally.

It normally takes four to six weeks to process an entry-visa application.

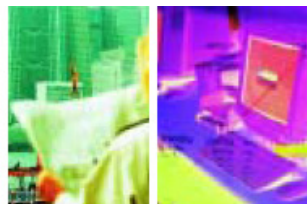
Different procedures and requirements apply for applicants from Mainland China and Taiwan. A quota free and non-sector specific special scheme, called the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals, provides special rules for employing people from the Mainland in Hong Kong. [Contact InvestHK](#) for further details.

Once individuals have resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than seven years and made Hong Kong their permanent residence, individuals may apply for their permanent residence, which gives them right of abode and right to work with no requirement for a visa.

Related Links

-  [Hong Kong visas for employment](#)
-  [Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals](#)

Capital Investment Entrant Scheme



Capital Investment Entrant Scheme

This visa is available where an individual can commit investing HK\$6.5 million in Hong Kong in a permissible investment asset class and is able to demonstrate that he is capable of supporting and accommodating himself and his dependants, if any, on his own without relying on any return on the permissible investment assets, employment or public assistance in Hong Kong.

It is intended for persons who make capital investment in Hong Kong but would not be engaged in the running of any business in the city.

Related Links

-  [Capital Investment Entrant Scheme](#)

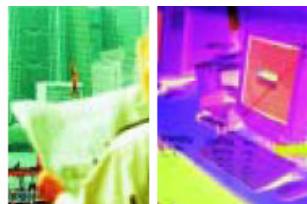


Dependent visa

The person who is successful in receiving either an employment visa or Investment visa may also bring their spouse and dependent children to Hong Kong provided there are sufficient funds and suitable accommodation for them.

The limit on their stay is the same as on that of the applicant.

They are allowed to take up study in Hong Kong during their stay. Dependents are required to apply to the Immigration Department for permission to work, whether paid or unpaid.



Typical benefits and terms

Wages and typical working week

There is no legal minimum wage in Hong Kong. Wages can be calculated by the hour, day or month, or by piece meal rate. The government issues quarterly payroll statistics on a sample of positions as a benchmark guide to the local market rates. [Contact InvestHK](#) for further details.

The normal working week in non-office based industries is eight hours a day, six days a week (Monday to Saturday). In offices, a five or a five-and-a-half-day week is normal. Some companies compromise by allowing staff to work alternate Saturday mornings.

Benefits employers are **required by law** to provide:

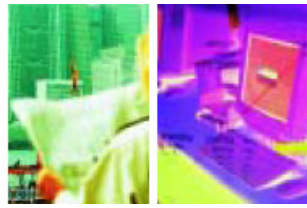
- Statutory holidays - Not to be confused with general holidays that apply to banks, schools, public offices and government departments, statutory holidays are prescribed in law. Note only some holidays in Hong Kong are the same as the Mainland.
- Pension contributions to Hong Kong's Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) - Hong Kong's MPF is a privately managed fund designed to provide retirements benefits. In general, MPF applies to all members of the workforce between the ages of 18 and 65. Both employers and employees are required to contribute 5% of the employees monthly income into a registered MPF scheme, up to a maximum of \$1,000 each per month. Employees may however choose to contribute more. If an employee's monthly income is below HK\$5,000, employees do not have to contribute, but may choose to do so.
- Sick leave - Employees are entitled to paid sick leave, for a period determined by the length of their employment.
- Maternity leave - Subject to eligibility criteria being met, maternity leave is granted for a minimum of 10 weeks.
- Severance payments - Employees who have been employed for at least two years are entitled to severance pay if he/she is dismissed by reason of redundancy or being laid off.
- Long-service payments - Certain employees who have been employed under a continuous contract for at least five years are entitled to long service pay on dismissal.

Other benefits employers **choose** to provide can include:

- Lunar new year bonus, usually equivalent to one month's extra pay
- Medical allowance - Subsidised health care is provided through Government run medical establishments. It is not unusual for overseas employees to want doctors of their nationality, who are often in private practice. This is often covered through additional private health cover.
- Subsidised meals
- Good-attendance bonus
- Annual leave
- Subsidised transport to and from work
- Free or subsidised accomodation

Related Links

- [Payroll statistics from the Government](#)
- [General holidays in Hong Kong](#)
- [Mandatory Provident Fund](#)



Recruiting your Hong Kong team

Many of the world's leading recruitment firms are based in Hong Kong, so can be engaged to assist search for suitable local employees. Other alternatives include

- consulting firms;
- the Employment Services Division of the Government's Labour Department which offers free employment and recruitment services to job seekers and employers;
- advertise job vacancies in local newspapers and online channels; and
- word of mouth. Putting the word out to local networking and business communities, like the chambers of commerce, can prove very fruitful.

Related Links

-  [Interactive Employment Service of the Labour Department](#)



Education

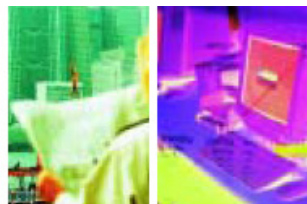
In recent years Hong Kong has taken steps to improve its already comprehensive education system, to promote all-round education and lifelong learning.

The language policy of the Government is to enable students and the working population to be biliterate (in Chinese and English) and trilingual (in Cantonese, English and Putonghua).

[Pre school and school](#)

[After school](#)





Pre school and school

Pre school

Hong Kong has over 700 kindergartens all of which are privately run. The English Schools Foundation (ESF, see below) run three kindergartens for children between 3 and 5. ESF schools are for English-speaking children.

School

Hong Kong children receive nine years' of free education. Starting at the age of six, they enjoy six years of primary education plus three years of secondary education. Some students elect to go to study for a further four years at secondary school.

Some schools adopt a whole-school approach, supporting students with special education needs or with a mild disability. There are also special schools for those with severe or multiple disabilities.

Government and aided schools make up about 90% of the school places. Another 4% come from direct subsidy scheme schools and non-profit-making private independent schools.

There are some 15 schools operated by the English Schools Foundation and 55 international schools. These schools add to the city's vibrant international character and can offer overseas residents an opportunity to continue their childrens' studies in their home nations' curricula and language. The international schools provide over 30,000 places.

English Schools Foundation

This foundation runs ten co-educational primary schools and five secondary schools with classes being held in English. The schools follow the English curriculum adapted for the Asia Pacific context.

The primary schools accept children aged 5 to 11. Admission to these schools is permitted at any time during the school year subject to places being available. For Year One, the official admission time is September every year for children who have reached the age of five or will be five by December of that year.

Secondary schools are for children in the 11-18 group. The courses offered lead to the General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in year 11 and to GCE Advanced level examinations in year 13.

For a child to qualify for entry to an ESF school, one of the parents should be a resident taxpayer in Hong Kong. A zoning system operates for all ESF schools, and children are normally expected to attend the school serving their residential area. The demand for places is strong.



It is advisable for parents to contact the ESF before arrival in Hong Kong to determine whether their child(ren) can join an ESF school.

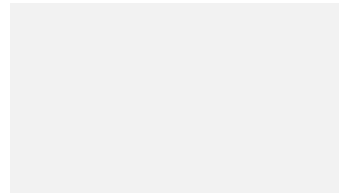
Other schools for expatriate children There are some 40 private schools offering places at primary and secondary levels suitable for expatriate children. These schools cover a range of non-local curricula including American, Australian, British, Canadian, French, German-Swiss, International Baccalaureate, Japanese, Korean and Singaporean.

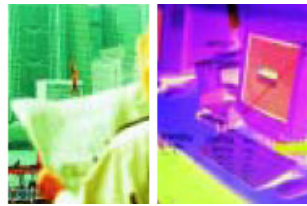
In addition to paying tuition fees for enrolment to most of these international schools, parents or companies are often required to buy a debenture or pay an additional annual contribution.

Demand for places in these schools is also strong so parents are advised to contact the Education and Manpower Bureau for information before arrival in Hong Kong.

Related Links

-  [English Schools Foundation](#)
-  [Education and Manpower Bureau](#)
-  [Education for Non-Chinese Speaking Children leaflet](#)





After school

Vocational Training Council

This council provides high quality and internationally recognised full-time pre-employment education and training courses at various levels up to high diploma level.

Technical Training

There are a few institutes targeting specific sectors. They include the Construction Industry Training Authority and the Clothing Industry Training Authority.

Higher education institutions

There are many post-secondary education opportunities, including courses from undergraduate to doctorate levels offered by 11 degree-awarding higher education institutions. They are:

- [Chinese University of Hong Kong](#)
- [City University of Hong Kong](#)
- [Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts](#)
- [Hong Kong Baptist University](#)
- [Hong Kong Institute of Education](#)
- [Hong Kong Polytechnic University](#)
- [Hong Kong University of Science & Technology](#)
- [Lingnan University](#)
- [Open University of Hong Kong](#)
- [University of Hong Kong](#)
- [Hong Kong Shue Yan College](#)



- › Currency
- › Banking
- › RMB Services
- › Funding

Banking and Finance

Hong Kong is widely recognised as one of the world's leading financial centres. It is home to many local banks, as well as branches of foreign banking institutions.

Virtually all of the main players are here assisting with the huge and growing trading and capital raising activities, resulting in there being critical mass of talented professionals, a mature and well respected regulatory framework, and a wide variety of creative services and products at a competitive price.

Banking and finance is one area where Hong Kong certainly punches above its weight! For more information on Hong Kong's banking superlatives, [click here](#) for further details.

- [Currency](#)
- [Banking](#)
- [RMB services](#)
- [Funding](#)

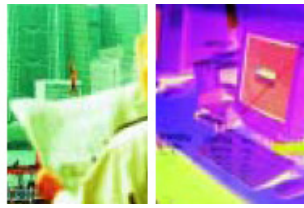
Related Links

- Financial services in Hong Kong

ASIA'S LARGEST
FUND-RASING
CENTRE IN 2004

Host of **71**
of the top 100 banks

1,900
authorised unit trusts
& mutual funds



Currency

Hong Kong has a currency - the Hong Kong dollar - that is freely convertible and has no capital restrictions. 100 cents make up one dollar.

For more than 20 years, the Hong Kong dollar has been pegged to the US dollar, under the Linked Exchange Rate System. This affords some degree of stability with the exchange rate fluctuating minimally around the HK\$7.8:US\$1 pegged rate.

Hong Kong does not have a central Government bank, so three banks have note issuing privileges. They are HSBC, Standard Chartered Bank and Bank of China.

The city's currency is different from the Mainland where the Renminbi (abbreviated to RMB) is used. Renminbi is the generic name for the currency and the denominations are yuan and fen (1 yuan = 100 fen).

Other major currencies are freely available for purchase at banks and foreign currency suppliers at market rates. Sometimes a commission will be charged for the transaction.

There is no restriction on currency trading or international movement of funds, including entry and repatriation of capital or on conversion and remittance of profits and dividends derived from investments in Hong Kong. Hong Kong has one of the largest foreign exchange reserves holdings in the world.

At Chinese New Year, it is very common for people to give "lai see" or lucky money. Typically this should be a crisp new note, folded in half and given to the recipient in a red and gold envelope. A few years ago, and in a change from the norm, the Government issued a special HK\$10 note to meet the demand for new notes for the new lunar year.

Banking

Hong Kong has a three-tiered structure of deposit-taking institutions. They are licensed banks, restricted licence banks and deposit taking companies and are collectively known as authorised institutions (AIs). The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) is the licensing authority for all three types of AIs.

Only licensed banks, commonly known as commercial banks, may operate current and savings accounts and accept deposits of any size and maturity.

Banking facilities are available to foreign investors on a non-discriminatory basis. Services typically include:

- deposit accounts of any size and maturity
- loans and advances
- discount trade bills, bankers acceptances, documentary credits, factoring
- deal in gold, foreign exchange and securities
- provide business consultative services
- provide private banking services

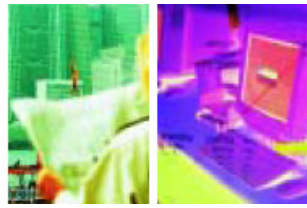
Hong Kong does not have a central Government bank, so three banks have note issuing privileges. They are HSBC, Standard Chartered Bank and Bank of China.

Hong Kong has a robust interbank payment system, which operates through the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system. All RTGS payment transactions are settled in real time across the books of the HKMA thereby reducing or eliminating foreign exchange settlement risk caused by any time gap. There are RTGS systems for US dollars and Euro, as well as Hong Kong dollars.

[How to open a bank account](#)

Related Links

- 📄 [Hong Kong Association of Banks](#)
- 📄 [Financial Services and Treasury Bureau](#)
- 📄 [Hong Kong Monetary Authority](#)



How to open a bank account

The process and documentary requirements for opening a bank account vary depending on the type of entity, the type of bank account and from bank to bank. Like domestic companies, overseas companies can open a wide range of bank accounts.

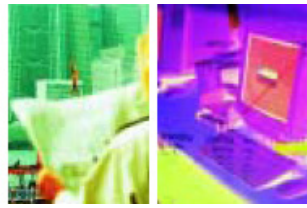
The following is therefore a rough guide only for a limited company incorporated in Hong Kong. Registration and incorporation of the company must first be complete before the bank account can be opened.

The company should submit to the bank in person, the following (certified as true copies where applicable).

1. Certificate of Incorporation
2. Business Registration Certificate
3. Copy of the last annual return and subsequent key documents filed with the Companies Registry
4. Documentation that proves the company is in business eg audited financial statements, a contract or an invoice
5. From the directors:
 - o for a newly setup company, a director's declaration on shareholders information
 - o a mandate for opening the account signed by a quorum of directors
 - o proof of identity, nationality and address of directors, as well as authorised signatories, principal shareholders and beneficial owners
 - o completed account opening form and signature cards

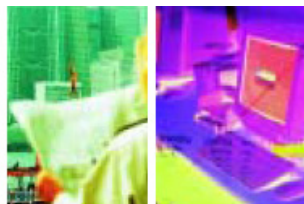
Banks normally require a minimum deposit before they open an account. This can be as little as HK \$2,000.

Although the process is straightforward and transparent, all banks reserve the right to ask for further details as necessary.



RMB Services

In 2004, Hong Kong became the first place outside the Mainland to conduct personal Renminbi (RMB, the currency of the Mainland) business, including deposit-taking, currency exchange, remittances and credit cards. Some Hong Kong banks also started issuing RMB cards to facilitate cross-boundary spending by Hong Kong residents.



Funding

Beyond short term loan/debt and trade finance through banks, foreign enterprises may also look to finance their operations through venture capital, grants and equity. See below for more details on each topic.

Venture capital

A stable currency, no capital movement restrictions, low and simple tax structure and sound regulatory framework have made Hong Kong's venture capital market thrive.

Hong Kong professionals manage over a quarter of the total venture capital pool in the Asia Pacific region, with an overwhelming majority of venture funds coming from overseas and being invested into overseas companies in the region.

Given the propensity to do business of the resident population and the large proportion of high net worth individuals in the city, Hong Kong is also ideal for sourcing business angels.

[Hong Kong Venture Capital and Private Equity Association](#)

Grants

Hong Kong offers no special incentives to overseas investors. The strengths of Hong Kong are incentive enough! [Click here for more on Hong Kong's advantages](#)

That said, in keeping with level playing field approach of the government, overseas investors who own Hong Kong incorporated companies are treated like their local counterparts and are eligible to apply for a few grants and special arrangements that are available when specific criteria are met.

Many of these are in the technology sector, so for more information, [click here](#)

Other arrangements are administered by the SME division of the Trade and Industry Department. [For more information click here](#)

Equity

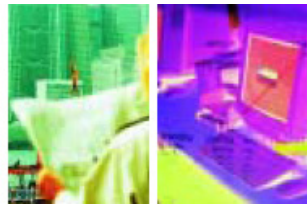
There are two distinct exchanges in Hong Kong: the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong and the Growth Enterprise Market (GEM).

[Stock Exchange of Hong Kong](#)
[Growth Enterprise Market](#)

Related Links

- ▶ [Hong Kong Venture Capital and Private Equity Association](#)
- ▶ [More on Hong Kong's advantages](#)
- ▶ [Technology sector in Hong Kong](#)
- ▶ [Small and Medium Enterprises Funding Scheme](#)





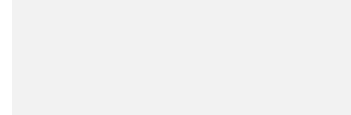
Stock Exchange of Hong Kong

A few years ago, the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited, Hong Kong Futures Exchange Limited demutualised and together with Hong Kong Securities Clearing Company Limited, merged under a single holding company called Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEx). The Stock Exchange is one of the largest stock markets in the world and is consistently ranked in the top few fund raising centres of the world, based on the funds raised in new initial public offerings (IPOs).

The listing rules governing the market are comprehensive and include prescribed requirements in terms of documentation (including a listing document containing financial history and forms), timeframes, notices, publicity requirement, fees and parties involved.

Related Links

- [Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited \(HKEx\)](#)
- [The Main Board - Listing Rules](#)





Growth Enterprise Market

This market has lower listing requirements so is open to more companies. It is intended to bridge the gap for "high risk/high return" enterprises with great aspirations that do not fulfill the profitability/track record requirements of the main board of the Exchange.

The lower entry thresholds make this market attractive to large and small enterprises from a range of sectors which require additional equity. The market also provides a useful exit channel for venture capitalists. The market is akin to the NASDAQ in the US and Alternative Investment Market (AIM) in the UK.

Mainland Chinese enterprises now comprise about one third of the market capitalisation of the Main Hong Kong Main Exchange. Hong Kong is the most important capital raising centre for businesses in the Mainland.

Related Links

- [Growth Enterprise Market \(GEM\)](#)
- [The Growth Enterprise Market - Listing Rules](#)



Land, Premises and Utilities

Land and premises in Hong Kong are renowned for being expensive. The reality is, like any other location, if you want a showcase, prestigious address you will have to pay a premium for it. If you look a couple of underground train stops away, rents are however very reasonable and compare well with other leading cities.

One feature about Hong Kong is because of the vertical stature of its residential and office buildings, everything is convenient - you are never too far away from anything. This is even more the case because of the cheap and dependable transportation system and networks.

Utilities are reliable, high quality and reasonably priced, so altogether, your property may not be such a financial burden as you first may think.

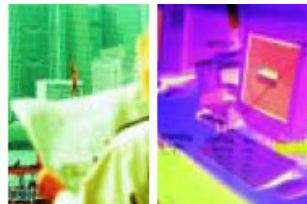
The Government owns all land in Hong Kong and the rights to occupy, develop and use land are granted to lessees by the Government.

Leasing procedures are straightforward with no restrictions on foreign companies in Hong Kong.

The land mass of Hong Kong is small and a large proportion of it is protected. As such a precious resource, the property market is widely recognised as a barometer on the economy's health. Given the small amount of land that is built upon, Hong Kong offers a particularly impressive range of properties.



- Residential
- Office
- Industrial
- Utilities



Residential properties

Hong Kong provides a wide variety of residential accommodation in terms of dwelling size, type and location, ranging from detached villas with private garden to high-rise apartments.

Properties are mostly let unfurnished. There are furniture letting agencies should inhabitants not want to buy new items or ship their own furniture from overseas.

There are no restrictions on where foreign nationals may live although it is typical that expatriates are found in clusters, where international shops, schools and other preferred amenities are found.

Typically property seekers will engage a consultant to assist finding an appropriate residence. Many of the international property agents are in Hong Kong. Other means include responding to private advertisements in newspapers, on websites and through contacts.

Properties are listed by size (normally square feet) and by monthly rent which will either include or exclude the management fee. Inhabitants must pay utilities like rates, water and electricity In addition to rent and management fee.

The property agent will also assist negotiate the terms of the lease, including any improvements requested, for example repainting walls and repolishing floors. Sometimes rent free periods can be negotiated to compensate for such inconvenience.

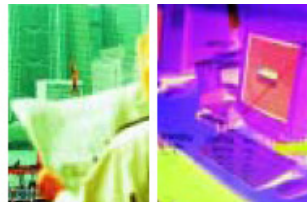
The most common lease term is for two years, with the opportunity to give a two-month's notice of your intention to leave after 12 months. In general it is difficult to obtain a lease for periods shorter than 14 months. A deposit of two months' rent is typical. The property agent will take around half-a-month to a month's rent as commission for their services.

Other alternatives:

- **Long leases at hotels.** Some hotels provide special deals for people who are staying in the city for a number of weeks or months.
- **Serviced apartments.** There are a number of companies that provide fully furnished and serviced apartments. These can give service akin to a hotel.
- **Buying property.** Buying a property is straight forward and can take just a few weeks. Banks may lend up to 95% of the value and interest rates are generally quite low compared to other developed economies. There are no restrictions on foreigners owning property in Hong Kong.

Related Links

- [Government - property market statistics](#)



Office properties

The core office area, or central business district (CBD), in Hong Kong is on Hong Kong island, near the distinguished stone pillared and dome-roofed Legislative Council Building.

Other popular office districts include Wanchai, Causeway Bay and Quarry Bay to the east of Central on Hong Kong Island, and Tsim Sha Tsui on the Kowloon peninsula.

Leases are typically two or three years with an option to renew. After agreeing with the landlord on the principle terms of the lease, the landlord will issue a Letter of Offer. This has to be counter-signed and returned by the tenant within a specified period with a security deposit (usually two to three months' rental, plus management service charge and estimated rates).

A tenancy agreement covering the respective duties and obligation of landlord and tenant will be signed within a specific period and will be registered by the landlord at the Land Registry.

Apart from rent (plus the initial security deposit), office occupancy costs in Hong Kong may also include:

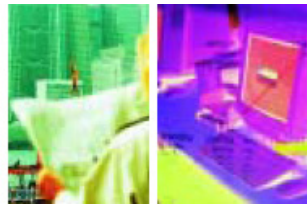
- one off payment to property agent (normally one month's rent) after receiving their services in finding the property
- management service charges, normally paid in advance this charge typically covers air-conditioning, security, common areas cleaning, and other building services.
- Government rates at 5% of annual rental value, payable quarterly in advance
- Land rent
- Legal fees should you engage a lawyer to process the tenancy agreement.

Other alternatives to renting an office:

- **serviced offices.** There are many centres that provide short term leases of virtually any length on fully serviced offices of a space and configuration to meet your needs.
- **virtual office.** Some centres also provide a virtual office, whereby they act as switchboard, mailing address, meeting room provider and more for a business people who actually operate day-to-day elsewhere, for example from home.

Related Links

- [Government - property market statistics](#)



Industrial buildings

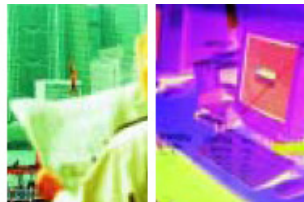
There are three main types of industrial building in Hong Kong and they are principally found in Hong Kong's industrial estates.

1. Flatted factories are for general manufacturing processes, normally intended for sale or lease
2. Industrial/office premises with floor space in developments with planning permission and lease modification for industrial/office use, and is certified for occupation as such
3. Specialised factories comprise all other factory premises, primarily purpose-built for specialised manufacturing process, usually for occupation by a single operator.

Most of the flatted factories and industrial/office buildings are found in Kwun Tong and Tsuen Wan, while around 80% of specialised factories are in the New Territories.

Related Links

-  [Government - property market statistics](#)



Utilities

The distribution networks and customer services of Hong Kong's public utility electricity, gas and water supplies are reliable and strong, as you would expect from a developed and leading economy. They also represent very good value for money.

Costs for utilities are usually borne by the inhabitants and are in addition to other costs of domestic and commercial properties, like rent and management charges. The payment of connection fees and deposits to the supplier are quite typical.

Electricity

Electricity is supplied by the Hongkong Electric Company Limited and CLP Power Hong Kong Limited. The former provides electricity to Hong Kong Island and Lamma Island. The latter caters for the Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories and the other outlying islands.

The two electricity companies in Hong Kong provide one of the most reliable supplies of electricity in the world. They also provide technical advisory service on application and connection of new supplies, power quality, and any other pertinent matters relating to the supply of electricity. Bills are normally raised on a monthly basis.

Fuel gas

Fuel gas is widely used throughout Hong Kong for domestic, commercial and industrial purposes. The common types of fuel gas in Hong Kong are Towngas and industrial gases.

Water supply

Water is supplied by the Water Supplies Department. All water users in Hong Kong are subject to charges for sewage services. Water billing is normally four months in arrears.

Related Links

- [Hongkong Electric Company Limited](#)
- [CLP Power Hong Kong Limited](#)
- [Towngas - The Hong Kong & China Gas Co Ltd](#)
- [Industrial Gases - Hong Kong Oxygen & Acetylene Co Ltd](#)
- [Water Supplies Department](#)
- [Drainage Services Department](#)



- ▶ International communities
- ▶ Living in Hong Kong
- ▶ Leisure, sport and the outdoors
- ▶ Nightlife, food and drink
- ▶ Arts and culture

Lifestyle

Hong Kong offers a stimulating, dynamic and cosmopolitan lifestyle. It's a city that never sleeps, but you can choose more tranquil options too!

As an international city with an expatriate population of various overseas communities, there is a wealth of choice for all members of the family and to suit all budgets. For HK\$2.20, you can view arguably the most spectacular cityscape from the over 100 year old Star Ferry!

Hong Kong is truly a city of contrasts with the most modern malls just around the corner from the most traditional markets; the latest architecture adjacent to stone buildings of the colonial era; the most decadent and lavish lifestyles next to the most simple.

It is a intriguing combination of old and new, east and west, local and international, that titillates the senses. Life in Hong Kong is anything but dull. The city is compact, accessible, safe and welcoming. The only limiting factor is your imagination!



- International communities
- Living in Hong Kong
- Leisure, sport and the outdoors
- Nightlife, food and drink
- Arts and culture



International communities

Aptly named as Asia's world city and widely known to be one of the most international cities in the world, of Hong Kong's population of around 7 million, approximately 5% or 350,000 are of non-Chinese descent.

This means that alongside the Chinese culture, art, history, sports, pastimes and leisure activities, there are diverse international groups that form their own cultural centres and follow their own cultural traditions within the city; adding more colour, sounds, tastes, sights and dimension to an already vibrant place.

Related Links

- [US Community](#)
- [UK Community](#)
- [Swiss Community](#)
- [Singaporean Community](#)
- [Nordic Community](#)
- [Dutch Community](#)
- [Canadian Community](#)
- [Indian Community](#)
- [Australian Community](#)
- [French Community](#)
- [German Community](#)
- [Italian Community](#)
- [Latin American Community \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Latin American Community \(Portugese\)](#)
- [Korean Community](#)
- [Japanese Community](#)



The US community in Hong Kong

Over the years, American culture, food and lifestyle have left their mark on Hong Kong and have helped make it a truly cosmopolitan city. The US community is one of the larger non-Chinese groups within the city. In fact The American Chamber of Commerce is Hong Kong's largest international business association.

Which US companies?

The 1,100 plus US companies in Hong Kong are a vibrant and diverse group. There is a strong presence of professional services with the leading accounting firms, law firms and consultancies all having offices here. Large financial institutions, insurance companies and investment banks also have a significant presence in Hong Kong.

The US is the fifth largest source of foreign direct investment. In 2003, US direct investment in Hong Kong amounted to US\$24.1 billion.

The US is Hong Kong's second largest trading partner after the Mainland of China. For further information about trade between the nations, go to www.tdctrade.com/mktprof/america/mpusa.htm

Hong Kong and beyond

Many of the firms establish their Hong Kong offices to serve their operations in the Mainland and more in Asia. Hong Kong is the preferred location in Asia for regional headquarters and offices. As at mid 2004, there were 256 regional headquarters of US companies, and 557 regional offices in Hong Kong. There totals are the largest from any one country.

US people in Hong Kong

There are over 55,000 American passport holders in Hong Kong. With an alumni of some 100,000, there are many connections to US academia, in addition to the over 7,300 students who study at American schools each year.

Leading US companies operating in Hong Kong include:

3M
 American Express
 American International Group
 Apple Computer
 AT&T
 Bank of America
 Bechtel
 Boeing
 Caltex
 Citigroup
 Coca-Cola
 Dow Chemical
 Dow Jones
 DuPont
 Emerson Electric
 EMC Corporation
 ExxonMobil
 Federal Express
 General Electric
 Gillette
 Goldman Sachs
 Hewlett-Packard
 IBM
 Johnson & Johnson
 J P Morgan Chase
 Kodak
 Marriot International
 McDonald's
 Merrill Lynch
 Microsoft
 Morgan Stanley Dean Witter
 Motorola
 Nike
 Northwest Airlines
 Oracle
 Polo Ralph Lauren
 Proctor & Gamble
 Sybase
 Time Warner
 United Airlines
 UPS
 Walt Disney
 Yahoo!

What leading American people in Hong Kong say about the city

"In Hong Kong, investors have a true 21st Century city: efficient, fast-paced, and well governed. Businesses operate on a level playing field, with unparalleled access to the fastest growing region of the world. Hong Kong's list of "firsts" and "bests" is under-reported, but grows longer every year. If you haven't visited Hong Kong lately, you owe it to your shareholders to check it out before you make another move in Asia."

Jack Maisano, President, American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong

"With the experience of establishing and operating offices of my company in 43 countries, I have a solid base for comparison. There is nowhere in the world that has made it as easy open and operate a business as Hong Kong - and that's why we have made our world headquarters here. It's truly an ideal business environment."

James Thompson, Chairman

Some recent US investors and clients of InvestHK include:

Heller Ehrman - law firm

OppenheimerFunds - one of the largest asset management companies in the US

[US Consulate General](#)
[The American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong](#)
[The American Club](#)
[The American Women's Association of Hong Kong](#)
[American International School](#)

Related Links

- [Trade between HK and the US](#)
- [US Consulate General](#)
- [The American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong](#)
- [The American Club](#)
- [The American Women's Association of Hong Kong](#)
- [American International School](#)



The UK community in Hong Kong

British companies have shaped Hong Kong like no other business community. From the early traders who established their firms in what was a British colony to the high-tech investment of recent years after the handover in 1997, relationships and commercial success with the Brits continue to flourish.

Which UK companies?

The UK is one of the largest investors in Hong Kong with investments amounting to US\$6.1 billion at the end of 2003. The 1,000 plus companies making up this figure are from a range of industries. Technology, telecommunications, engineering and construction are well represented, as British companies seek to support explosive manufacturing growth in the Mainland. In the business world, large British financial institutions, insurance companies, laws firms, accountants, consultants and surveyors also have a significant presence. A few British high street brands are also very conspicuous in the city.

The UK is also Hong Kong's leading European trading partner, responsible for over US\$12 billion in trade in 2004. For more information about Hong Kong and the UK's trading relationship, go to <http://www.tdctrade.com/mktprof/europe/mpuk.htm>

Hong Kong and beyond

Hong Kong is a strategic entry point for businesses seeking to establish themselves in Asia; it is also a logical place from which to manage Asian operations. Hong Kong is conveniently placed to enable the close management of operations in the Mainland in a mature and robust business infrastructure and legal framework.

According to the Hong Kong Government's Census and Statistics Department, by mid 2004, 105 of the British companies operating in Hong Kong are regional headquarters and 211 are regional offices.

Brits in Hong Kong

Today there are some 17,780 Brits in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's education system has strong British roots and the qualifications and degrees are very similar to the ones awarded in the UK. There are about 16,000 Hong Kong students aged below 25, in British schools. Their alumni networks strengthen the ties between both places.

Key contacts for the British community in Hong Kong

[British Consulate-General Hong Kong](#)
[The British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong](#)
[British Council](#)
[Anglican-Episcopal Church](#)

Leading UK companies operating in Hong Kong

include:

Allied Pickfords
 Barclays Capital
 Body Shop
 BP
 British Airways
 British American Tobacco
 British Steel
 BT
 BUPA
 Burberry
 Coutts Bank
 Diageo
 Economist Group
 Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer
 HSBC
 Inchcape
 Intertek Testing Services
 Jaguar
 Jardine Matheson Group
 John Laing
 Lloyds TSB Bank
 Marks and Spencer
 National Westminster Bank
 Oxford University Press
 Prudential Assurance
 Reuters
 Rolls-Royce
 Standard Chartered Bank
 Virgin Atlantic

What leading Brits in Hong Kong say about the city

"Hong Kong is the ideal entry point to the thriving markets of the Pearl River Delta in the same way as the UK is the ideal gateway to Europe. Hong Kong's rule of law, respect for human rights, free flow of information and people and sophisticated services sector create a familiar operating environment for UK investors."

Stephen Bradley, British Consul-General to Hong Kong

"Rule of Law, level playing fields, adaptable, business focused, commercial, practical - these are the words to describe Hong Kong. If you want more - consider superb communications and logistics and a great jumping off point for the rest of China. Hong Kong - a great place to be."

Christopher Page, Chairman, British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong

Some recent UK investors and clients of InvestHK include:

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
 Source Direct International Limited
 Chelsea Mortgage Management International



Related Links

- [Trade between HK and the UK](#)
- [British Consulate-General Hong Kong](#)
- [The British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong](#)
- [British Council](#)
- [Anglican-Episcopal Church](#)
- [The English Schools Foundation](#)



The Swiss community in Hong Kong

Swiss companies and entrepreneurs have been doing business in Hong Kong for 150 years. Despite their very different heritage and locations in the world, Switzerland and Hong Kong are similar - they are both a regional and international financial centres and are heavily service oriented.

Which Swiss companies?

The over 160 Swiss firms doing business in Hong Kong represent a diverse range of sectors including: banking, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, business and professional services, electronics, foods, freight forwarding, inspection, insurance, machinery, engineering, textiles and garments, watches and jewellery, and trading.

Switzerland was Hong Kong's 14th largest foreign investor in 2002, contributing US\$2.4 billion.

In 2003, the two-way trade between Switzerland and Hong Kong totalled some US\$4 billion, with the most significant items being jewellery and precious metals and watches and clocks.

Hong Kong and beyond

Many enterprises look to Hong Kong to serve their greater Mainland and Asian business. According to the Government Census and Statistics Department over 100 regional headquarters and offices for companies from Switzerland were located in Hong Kong as at mid 2004.

Swiss people in Hong Kong

There are some 1,300 Swiss nationals in Hong Kong. There are strong cultural links between Switzerland and Hong Kong, which bridge the areas of lifestyle, commerce, education too. Most recently a "Switzerland Greets Hong Kong" campaign has showcased Swissness - a multi-faceted programme that is a combination of precision, reliability, tradition, innovation and wellbeing. See www.switzerlandgreetshongkong.com/

Key contacts for the Swiss community in Hong Kong

[Consulate-General of Switzerland, Hong Kong](#)
[Swiss Business Council](#)
[Swiss Association of Hong Kong](#)
[German-Swiss International School](#)

Leading Swiss companies operating in Hong Kong include:

Atlantic Forwarding
 Bally
 Clariant
 Credit Suisse
 Danzas
 Desco
 DKSH
 Egon Zehnder
 Hilti
 Kuehne & Nagel Management
 M&R Forwarding
 Nestle
 Novartis Pharmaceuticals
 Panalpina
 Roche
 Rolex
 Schenker International
 Schindler Lifts
 SG Fafalen & Co
 SGS
 Sika
 Swatch
 Swiss International Airlines
 Swiss Reinsurance Company
 UBS
 Vicorinox
 Winterthur Life
 Zuellig Pharma
 Zurich Insurance Holdings

What leading Swiss people in Hong Kong say about the city

"Hong Kong, Asia's world city, is the perfect hub for Swiss companies aiming at developing their activities not only in China but also in East and South-East Asia. Here they will find suitable partners for their expansion plans in this part of the world, partners who are efficient and well connected and have a long experience of doing business in the region."

Francois Barras, Consul General of Switzerland in Hong Kong

"The relationship between Hong Kong and Switzerland has been strong for many years. Swiss business-people have enjoyed the professional and easy ways of doing business in this great city. There are similarities between Hong Kong and Switzerland when it comes to the hard working and dedicated people and their success."

Hans R Kunz, President, Swiss Business Council

Some recent Swiss investors and clients of InvestHK include:

S.G. FAFALEN & Co. - first Swiss law firm in Hong Kong

Ulysse Nardin (watchmaker) opens Asia flagship store in Hong Kong



Related Links

- ["Switzerland Greets Hong Kong" campaign](#)
- [Consulate-General of Switzerland, Hong Kong](#)
- [Swiss Business Council](#)
- [Swiss Association of Hong Kong](#)
- [German-Swiss International School](#)



The Singaporean community in Hong Kong

As leading financial and service centres in Asia, Hong Kong and Singapore parallels are often drawn between the two cities. As firms allies in Asia, the two cities operations and success are intertwined.

Which Singapore companies?

The Singaporean community in Hong Kong has long been actively involved in various business sectors. They include, for example, property, financial services, transportation, food and beverages, textiles, retail, trading, travel and tourism, electronics, information technology, publishing and management services.

Singapore is one of the largest sources of foreign direct investment for Hong Kong, accounting for a cumulative US \$73.5 billion at end-2002.

Total trade between Hong Kong and Singapore amounted to US\$16.2 billion in 2003. For more information about trade between the cities, go to www.tdctrade.com/mktprof/asia/mpsin.htm

Hong Kong and beyond

Located in the heart of Asia, Hong Kong is the preferred location for regional offices and headquarters. According to the Hong Kong Government's Census and Statistics Department, there were 35 regional headquarters and almost 100 regional offices of Singapore companies in Hong Kong in mid 2004. Many choose Hong Kong as a launch pad and risk manager for their work in the Mainland.

Singaporean people in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's Singaporean community amounts to some 9,000 people who are involved in a diverse range of businesses and activities.

Key contacts for the Singapore community in Hong Kong

[Consulate General of Singapore](#)

[The Singapore Chamber of Commerce \(Hong Kong\)](#)

[The Singapore Association](#)

[Singapore International School](#)

Leading Singaporean companies operating in Hong Kong include:

Collin Ng & Partners
 Development Bank of Singapore (DBS)
 Hong Leong International (HK) Ltd
 Informatics
 Keppel FELS China
 Kopitiam
 MedicCorp News
 Meritus Hotels & Resorts
 Money World Asia
 NCSI
 Overseas-Chinese Banking Corporation (OCBC)
 Pacific International Lines
 Pico Far East Holdings Ltd
 Raffles International Hotels & Resorts
 Raffles Medical Group
 Singamas Container
 Singapore Airlines
 Singapore Petroleum
 Singapore Press Holdings
 Singapore Technologies Electronics
 Singapore Telecom
 SNP Corporate Ltd
 United Overseas Bank (UOB)

What leading Singaporeans in Hong Kong say about the city

"Hong Kong and Singapore are close business partners. Over the decades, many Singaporeans have come to work or start their business in Hong Kong and venture into China. As a chamber for the Singaporean businesses SCC(HK) always welcomes you to this home from home."

Robert Ng, Chairman, The Singapore Chamber of Commerce (Hong Kong)

"Hong Kong is no strange place to Singaporeans. With its vibrant, inspiring and dynamic lifestyle, it offers a superb environment in which to work and to enjoy life. The Singapore Association welcomes you all to Hong Kong."

David Lim, Chairman, Singapore Association

Related Links

- [Trade between HK and Singapore](#)
- [Consulate General of Singapore](#)
- [The Singapore Chamber of Commerce \(Hong Kong\)](#)
- [The Singapore Association](#)
- [Singapore International School](#)



The Nordic community in Hong Kong

The business communities of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, are well represented in Hong Kong. Their fame is partly attributable to the world leading brands founded and managed in the Nordic countries.

Which Nordic companies?

There are over 270 companies from the four Nordic countries doing business in Hong Kong. These companies are a vibrant and diverse group and are active in the following sectors: telecommunications, electronics, banking and finance, trading and other services, design, retail, transportation, engineering, machinery, food and beverage, logistics and shipping.

Trade between the Nordic countries and Hong Kong totalled some US\$2.5 billion in 2003, well balanced between imports and exports. Major items included telecommunications equipment and parts, cards, measuring instruments, paper and paperboard, electric appliances, textiles and garments, among others.

Hong Kong and beyond

Hong Kong is the preferred location in Asia for regional offices and headquarters. According to the Government Census and Statistics Department, there are over 90 regional headquarters or offices of companies from the Nordic countries.

InvestHK enjoyed great success in Stockholm in 2004, when it co-hosted an event titled Hong Kong and Shenzhen: Partners for Your China Strategy. This even, the first in a Nordic country presented the strengths of the Pearl River Delta to local businessmen.

Nordic people in Hong Kong

There are over 2,000 residents from the four countries in Hong Kong.

Key contacts for the Nordic community in Hong Kong

Royal Danish Consulate General Hong Kong

[Danish Business Association Hong Kong](#)

[Consulate General of Finland, Hong Kong](#)

[Finnish Business Council](#)

[Finnish Society](#)

[Norwegian Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong](#)

[Klubb Norge \(Norwegian Club\)](#)

[Norwegian Seafood Council](#)

[Consulate General of Sweden in Hong Kong](#)

Leading Nordic companies operating in Hong Kong include:

Carlsberg Brewery
 Dansk HK Ltd
 ECCO
 Georg Jensen
 Jebsen & Co Ltd
 Maersk
 SAS
 Santa Fe Transport International

DnB Asset Management
 Helly-Hansen
 Nordic Semiconductor ASA
 Rodskog
 Scandinavian Airlines System
 Tandberg
 Unitor Ships Service
 YARA

Finnair
 Finpro
 Krona
 Nokia
 Polar
 Saga Furs
 Salcomp
 UPM

AstraZeneca Hong Kong Ltd
 Electrolux (Far East) Ltd
 Ericsson Ltd
 H&M Hennes & Mauritz (Far East) Ltd
 IKEA
 Metro Publishing Hong Kong Ltd
 Tetra Pak China
 Volvo

What leading Nordic people in Hong Kong say about the city

"Though Norway is far from Hong Kong, we have been doing business here for many decades. Hong Kong is a fascinating city with lots of opportunities. Where else can we find a place with unique position as a portal to do business with China?"

Hallbjorn Stenhaug, Chairman, Norwegian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong

"'International' is the differentiating fact. Hong Kong offers an economy oriented towards the international economy, a high 'comfort level' for international business, good education and international schools, wide cultural and culinary supply and a wide range of activities in your free time."

Thomas Lagerqvist, Chairman, Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong

Some recent Nordic investors and clients of InvestHK include:

TANDBERG - Norway's leading visual communications firm



[Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong](#)

[Swedish Trade Council, Hong Kong](#)

[SWEA, Swedish Women's Educational Association](#)

[The Swedish Church](#)

[Norwegian International School](#)

Related Links

- [Danish Business Association Hong Kong](#)
- [Consulate General of Finland, Hong Kong](#)
- [Finnish Business Council](#)
- [Norwegian Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong](#)
- [Klubb Norge \(Norwegian Club\)](#)
- [Norwegian Seafood Council](#)
- [Consulate General of Sweden in Hong Kong](#)
- [Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong](#)
- [SWEA, Swedish Women's Educational Association](#)
- [Norwegian International School](#)



The Dutch community in Hong Kong

The Netherlands and Hong Kong share a few clear similarities - as highly successful transport hubs, financial centres and trading entrepots. The Dutch have enjoyed the cosmopolitan nature of Hong Kong, Asia's most international city, and have in many ways found a home away from home in Hong Kong.

Which Dutch companies?

The Netherlands is one of the largest investors in Hong Kong. It is the largest source of European investment in the city. As at the end of 2003, the total stock of direct investment from the Netherlands amounted to US\$32.8 billion.

There are around 250 Dutch companies operating in Hong Kong, with a particularly strong reputation in the following sectors: finance, trading, transportation and wholesaling/retailing.

The Netherlands consistently maintains its position among Hong Kong's top ten trading partners.

For more details about the two locations trading relationship, go to www.tdctrade.com/mktprof/europe/mpnetherlands.htm

Hong Kong and beyond

Many companies choose to set up in Hong Kong, to operate their regional business in Greater China and Asia Pacific. Almost 100 Dutch companies have established a presence in Hong Kong to act as either a regional headquarters or regional office.

Philips, for instance, relocated its Asia Pacific regional headquarters from Singapore to Hong Kong. With this more, the Dutch community in Hong Kong is expected to grow significantly in the next few years.

Dutch people in Hong Kong

There are over 3,500 Dutch expatriates residing in Hong Kong. They are an active community which have two dynamic non-for-profit associations that organise a variety of business and other activities: The Dutch Business Association and Nederlandse Vereniging Hong Kong.

Key contacts for the Dutch community in Hong Kong

[Dutch Consulate](#)

[Dutch Business Association](#)

[Nederlandse Vereniging Hong Kong](#)

Leading Dutch companies operating in Hong Kong

include:

ABN AMRO Bank
 Fortis Bank
 Friesland Foods
 Heineken
 ING Barings
 KLM
 Meespierson
 Mexx
 Oce
 P&O Nedlloyd
 Philips
 Rabobank
 Shell
 TNT
 Unilever
 Vendex KBB

What leading Dutch in Hong Kong say about the city

"The mixture of East and West, and the cosmopolitan character of the city helps make Hong Kong a very good place to live and work. Recreation facilities are easily available, particularly sailing and other water sports we liked in the Netherlands."

Henriette and Huub van Roosmalen

"In my view, Hong Kong should remain our main port of entry into Mainland China for a long time to come. That would be good for our business, but also for our expatriates as Hong Kong continues to provide the best environment for them and for their families."

Jan Revis, Consul-General of the Netherlands in Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR

Some Dutch investors and clients of InvestHK include:

Philips

KEMA Quality B.V.

F.van Lanschot Bankiers N.V.



Related Links

- [Trade between HK and the Netherlands](#)
- [Dutch Consulate](#)
- [Dutch Business Association](#)
- [Nederlandse Vereniging Hong Kong](#)



The Canadian community in Hong Kong

Canadian companies have always played an important part in Hong Kong's business community. Canada is a strategic trading partner for Hong Kong, responsible for US\$4 billion in trade in 2003. Canadian companies are also significant investors in Hong Kong, with cumulative investment amounting to US\$2.5 billion at the end of 2002.

Which Canadian companies?

The 150+ Canadian companies in Hong Kong are a vibrant and diverse group. Technology and financial services companies are particularly well represented, as companies seek to take advantage of increasing business opportunities in China. Large Canadian insurance firms and banks have a significant presence in Hong Kong, with many of them gradually expanding their client base, as well as their operations into Mainland China.

Canadian SMEs also flourish, particularly in the areas of IT, environmental technologies, infrastructure development and professional services.

For more information about Hong Kong's trade with Canada go to <http://www.tdctrade.com/mktprof/america/mpcan.htm>

Hong Kong and beyond

Hong Kong is a key entry point for businesses seeking to establish themselves in Asia, and a logical place from which to manage Asian operations. At least 30% of the Canadian companies in Hong Kong serve as a regional headquarters.

Canadian people in Hong Kong

There are currently more than 200,000 Canadian passport holders in Hong Kong. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong is the largest Canadian business association outside of Canada. There are 100,000 Canadian university alumni and 23 active alumni associations in Hong Kong, as well as three international Canadian schools.

Key contacts for the Canadian community in Hong Kong

[Canadian Consulate General in Hong Kong](#)
[Canadian Chamber of Commerce](#)
[Chinese Canadian Association of Hong Kong](#)
[Canadian University Association - Hong Kong](#)
[Canadian Club of Hong Kong](#)
[Canadian International School of Hong Kong](#)
[Phoenix International School](#)
[Delia School of Canada](#)

Leading Canadian companies operating in Hong Kong

include:

Air Canada
 Bank of Montreal
 Bank of Nova Scotia
 BCE Teleglobe
 Bombardier
 Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce
 CDP Asia Investments
 Falcon Insurance Company
 Manulife
 National Bank of Canada
 Nortel
 Royal Bank of Canada
 Sun Life Financial
 Toronto Dominion Bank

What leading Canadians in Hong Kong say about the city

"Hong Kong is a great place to work, an exciting place to live, and possesses a very business friendly environment. In Hong Kong we have found the legal, regulatory and physical infrastructure that supports achieving our business objectives."

Robin Hibberd, Senior Vice President Asia-Pacific,
The Bank of Nova Scotia

"The entrepreneurial spirit surges through Hong Kong like no other place, making it one of the most dynamic business communities in the world. Add to this the fact that it is surrounded by the fastest growing, most exciting manufacturing zone in the world, and you have a powerful combination for long term growth and prosperity."

Janet De Silva, Chairman, Canadian Chamber of
Commerce in Hong Kong

Some recent Canadian investors and clients of InvestHK include:

SwiftTrade Inc, Canada's largest proprietary trading company

ProgressLuv2Pak International Limited, Canada's largest packaging company



Related Links

- Trade between HK and Canada
- Canadian Consulate General in Hong Kong
- Canadian Chamber of Commerce
- Chinese Canadian Association of Hong Kong
- Canadian University Association " Hong Kong
- Canadian Club of Hong Kong
- Canadian International School of Hong Kong
- Phoenix International School
- Delia School of Canada



The Indian community in Hong Kong

The Indian community in Hong Kong has been heavily involved in trading with the rest of Asia and throughout the world since the 1840s. Indian's have had a significant impact on the development of Hong Kong. Indian nationals were fundamental to the founding of Hong Kong University and one of the city's most famous landmarks, The Star Ferry (linking Hong Kong island to the Kowloon peninsula).

Which Indian companies?

In recent years, Indians have become increasingly prominent in many sectors, in addition to trading, such as shipping, finance, information technology and management.

Total trade between Hong Kong and India amounted to some US\$5.86 billion in 2004, with imports and exports of precious and semi-precious stones accounting for the lions share of this figure. For more information on the trade between the two places, go to www.tdctrade.com/mktprof/asia/mpind.htm

Hong Kong and beyond

Hong Kong is an obvious choice of base for tackling the whole of South East Asia. It has particular appeal for Indians, since one of the official languages of Hong Kong is English.

InvestHK enjoyed great success in Mumbai and New Delhi in late 2004, when the Pearl River Delta area was presented for the first time in India, in the form of two "Hong Kong - Zhuhai Investment Environment Seminars".

Indian people in Hong Kong

Today Hong Kong's Indian community amounts to some 35,000, making it one of the largest ethnic communities in the city. The largest numbers are from the Sindhi and Gujarati areas. While maintaining many of their Indian traditions, such as languages and cultural activities, Indians have integrated well in Hong Kong, and take prominent roles in government, business, education and medicine.

Key contacts for the Indian community in Hong Kong

[Consulate General of India](#)

[The Indian Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong](#)

[Council of Hong Kong Indian Associations](#)

[India Club](#)

[India Association](#)

[Hong Kong Indian Women's Club](#)

[Nav Bharat Club](#)

[Non-resident Indian Association of Hong Kong](#)

[Forum of Indian Professionals in Hong Kong \(FIPHK\)](#)

[Overseas Indian's Business Association](#)

[Indian Arts Circle](#)

Leading Indian companies operating in Hong Kong

include:

Air India
 Apar Infotech Services Pvt Limited
 Apollo International
 Bank of Baroda (HK) Limited
 Bank of India
 Digital India
 HCL Technologies (HK) Limited
 HCL Perot Systems Limited
 Indo Hong Kong International Finance Limited
 Indian Overseas Bank
 Infosys Technologies Limited
 Internatcontinental Consultants & Technocrats Limited
 Leelalace (HK) Limited
 New India Assurance Company Limited
 NIIT TVE(HK) Limited
 Sky Capital Internationa Limited
 State Bank of India
 Tata Consultancy Services
 Tata South-East Asia Limited
 Voltas Limited
 Zensar Technologies Limited

What leading Indian people in Hong Kong say about the city

"Both India and Hong Kong are eager to expand their outreach in potentially profitable business activities. Hong Kong has everything to offer by way of modern infrastructure and excellent financial services geared to facilitate international commerce. As a springboard to China, Hong Kong is ideally situated to offer enterprising Indian companies a base from which to expand Indo-Chinese two-way business."

Dr H N Harilela GBS, OBE, JP, Chairman, Harilela's

"As a person of Indian origin who has made Hong Kong my home, this international metropolis has every ingredient for business success - an ideal financial and trading centre equipped with a conscientious workforce and a paradise for tourists, not only for those from the sub-continent but for all over the world."

Raj Sital BBS, JP, Chairman, The Indian Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong

Some Indian investors and clients of InvestHK include:

Inter-gems(HK) Ltd
 Wipro Infotech



Related Links

- [Trade between HK and India](#)
- [Consulate General of India](#)
- [The Indian Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong](#)
- [India Club](#)
- [Forum of Indian Professionals in Hong Kong \(FIPHK\)](#)



The Australian community in Hong Kong

As Hong Kong's counterpart in the Asia-Pacific time zones, Hong Kong and Australia have established and significant business ties. The total two-way merchandise trade was worth US\$4.3 billion in 2003. Australian direct investment in Hong Kong amounted to US\$7.2 billion in 2002.

Which Australian companies?

The 400+ Australian companies in Hong Kong span a range of industries. Education, legal, banking and transportation enterprises comprise the most notable Australian brands in the city.

Australian SMEs also flourish, particularly in the areas of import/export, IT and the other service areas.

Hong Kong is Australia's major export market for services, valued at US\$1.5 billion in 2002. Australia is also Hong Kong's 16th largest country for the import of goods, valued at US\$1.6 billion in 2003.

Hong Kong and beyond

Hong Kong is the preferred location in Asia for regional offices and headquarters. According to the Hong Kong Government's Census and Statistics Department, in 2004, there were 18 regional headquarters of Australian companies and 57 regional offices in Hong Kong. The city is also the natural and convenient base and risk manager for enterprises wanting to do business in the Mainland.

Australian people in Hong Kong

There are an estimated 50,000 Australians in the city. The Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong is the largest outside of Australia. The city is the largest source of overseas students in Australia and there are some 100,000 Australian alumni in Hong Kong. At Hong Kong schools, about 300 of the native English speaking teachers are Australian.

Key contacts for the Australian community in Hong Kong

[Australian Consulate-General](#)

[The Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong](#)

[The Australian Association](#)

[The Australian Chinese Association](#)

[Federation of Australian Alumni Associations \(FAAA\)](#)

[Australian International School](#)

Leading Australian companies operating in Hong Kong include:

Allens Arthur Robinson
 Australia and New Zealand
 Banking Group (ANZ)
 Barclay Mowlem
 BHP
 Clipsal
 CMG Asia
 Cochlear
 Commonwealth Bank of Australia
 Dymocks
 E. W. Cox
 ERG Transit Systems
 Foster's
 Hanson Pioneer Group Greater
 China
 Leighton Contractors (Asia)
 Macquarie Bank
 MLC Asia
 Mallesons Stephen Jaques
 Meinhardt Consulting Engineers
 Minter Ellison
 National Australian Bank
 Penfolds
 Qantas Airways
 TAC Pacific
 Telstra
 United Goninan
 Westpac Banking Corporation

What leading Australians in Hong Kong say about the city

"Australian business has enjoyed an active presence in Hong Kong for well over a century. With one of the most resilient and adaptable work forces in the world, Hong Kong is the place for business in Asia."

Alan Johnson, Chairman, Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and, Chief Executive, Horwarth Hong Kong Group Ltd

"Hong Kong has an excellent basic infrastructure, world-class communications network, well-established banking and legal system, and a geographical location as the gateway to the China market. It is the best landing place for Australian companies looking to expand their business in Asia."

Brian Pilbeam, Managing Director - Asian Business Development, Telstra International (HK) Ltd

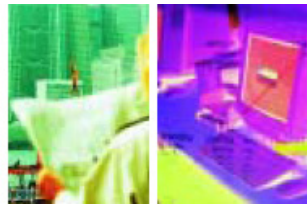
Some recent Australian investors and clients of InvestHK include:

Jan Logan - jewellery designer



Related Links

- [Australian Consulate-General](#)
- [The Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong](#)
- [The Australian Association](#)
- [The Australian Chinese Association](#)
- [Federation of Australian Alumni Associations \(FAAA\)](#)
- [Australian International School](#)



Living in Hong Kong

Living in Hong Kong is easy - things work and processes are in place to make life happen efficiently and effortlessly.

English is widely spoken and is one of the two official languages of Hong Kong (the other being Chinese). Local Hong Kongers are adept at operating bilingually.

Hong Kong enjoys a constitutionally-guaranteed free press and freedom of speech, which coupled with the telecommunications strengths means the city is well served with international media, from all channels including TV, print and online.

There are a number of places, on line and otherwise, to meet or foreign nationals in the city. Private clubs, chambers, consulates and clubs for a special interest are a good first stop. There are many other associations and networking groups that can help you assimilate into the city. One example is hongkong.asiaxpat.com

More details about other lifestyle elements:

Healthcare - in addition to the many Government clinics and hospitals, Hong Kong has a broad range of private practitioners, who offer healthcare ranging from Western medicine, to traditional Chinese medicing, to holistic approaches. The standard of medical care is very high and the hospitals are very efficient.

Safety - Hong Kong is one of the safest international cities in the world. The overall crime rate is lower than that of many other metropolitan cities. For example, you don't have to think twice about walking around the city at night.

Cars - not many people own a car in Hong Kong. The transport systems is that efficient and good value! Second hand cars are very good value although Hong Kong is also the place with the most Rolls Royce per capita in the world. There are a very few places where you may hire a car. Cars require separate registration to be able to drive in the Mainland. There are rules governing the import of cars to Hong Kong.

Weather - Hong Kong is sub-tropical. It is located in the Eastern Hemisphere, about 2,475km or 1,537 miles north of the equator. It is at approximately the same latitude as the Bahamas, Hawaii, and Mexico City.

More information about the climate in Hong Kong is available from the [Hong Kong Observatory](#).




Hong Kong has a weather warning system to ensure the populace is safe during the heavy rain season (in June/July) and in the typhoon season (in August/September). Hong Kong is not in an earthquake zone.

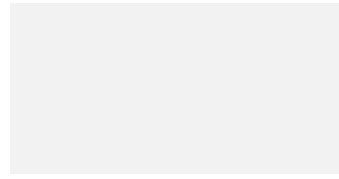
Help at home - It is very common for individuals and families to employ someone on a full or part-time basis to help with looking after the family, household chores and such like. These helpers, typically called amahs, sometimes live with the family they help.

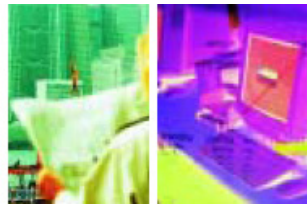
Pets - Hong Kong allows quarantine-free entry for inoculated animals from nearly 40 countries. Details are available from the Agriculture, [Fisheries and Conservation Department](#). A special permit is required to import many animals into Hong Kong. There are many veterinary and kennel/cattery services.



Related Links

-  hongkong.asiaxpat.com
-  [Hong Kong Observatory](#)
-  [Fisheries and Conservation Department](#)





Leisure, sport and the outdoors

Many are shocked to learn that not far from the typical Hong Kong cityscape of the island are Hong Kong's country parks. These are protected areas, where development is forbidden. They account for some 40% of the land area and include wild marshlands, home to the widest varieties of birdlife in the world.

In fact about 70% of Hong Kong is undeveloped comprising woodland, grassland and agricultural land. There are many hill walking tracks, and for the more adventurous and action seeking, rock climbing, paragliding, cricket, hockey (ice and field), golf, tennis, mountain biking and the fullest range of water sports.


There are also many opportunities to pursue Asian-origin interests such as yoga, tai chi, dragon boating, martial arts, mahjong to name but a few.

There are many public and private clubs that have tremendous indoor and outdoor facilities, like lawn bowls, squash courts, ten-pin bowling, gyms, badminton halls, basketball, and lots more. Kids (young and old!) are well catered for.

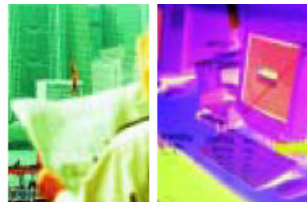
Rugby has grown in stature since Hong Kong began hosting its annual international sevens tournament 20 years ago. In 2005, Hong Kong played host to the IRB World Cup Sevens for the second time.

Horse racing is the most popular leisure activity, with enthusiastic spectators frequenting Happy Valley and Sha Tin race courses, either just to watch, but more often to bet and try to win some money. Horseracing and football betting are the only legal forms of gambling in Hong Kong.

Related Links

 [More information on what's on in the city](#)





Nightlife, food and drink

In Hong Kong, people really do work and play hard. Many malls and markets are even open very late, to let office workers enjoy another favourite Hong Kong pastime - shopping!

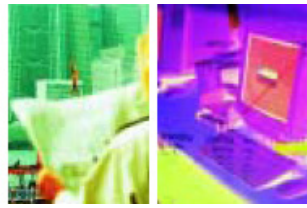
Hong Kong's dining, bar and clubbing scene offers the widest range of choice and variety in Asia, with something for everyone. Every Chinese regional cuisine is present. Beyond Chinese, diners are spoiled for choice - Sri Lankan, Russian, Nordic, Dutch, Nepali, Argentinian restaurants are all here, alongside the usual US, French, Italian, Irish, UK, Thai, Indian favourites.

There are many mainstream cinemas and some art cinemas that regularly feature blockbusters as well as low budget productions. Films are often shown in English with Chinese subtitles. Other films in foreign languages are also screened in Hong Kong. An annual international film festival is very popular.

Related Links

- bc magazine, hong kong
- A restaurant guide - www.foodeasy.com






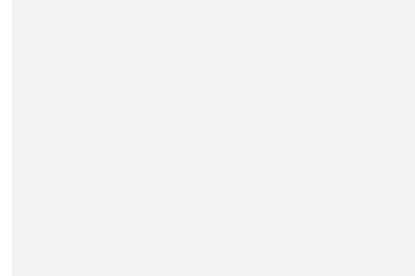
Arts and culture

With its east and west influences, Hong Kong is a fascinating place culturally, with many arts centres, concert halls, museums and libraries. The annual Arts Festival and cultural events all year round feature top performers from around the world. Hong Kong is well served for venues so our local arts academy and amateur clubs have suitable performance space.

For those who prefer to participate rather than spectate there are any number of opportunities for learning new skills and crafts at night or day classes.

Related Links

-  [Hong Kong Tourism Board Events calendar](#)





Research and Development

Since Hong Kong's main source of economic wealth is services, its main asset is the talent and expertise of its inhabitants. The government therefore is keen to develop the capabilities of its people, through upskilling and consolidating the city's position as a knowledge-driven economy. In fact, the government offers a few grants and favourable financing terms for certain R&D activities that meet specific criteria.

From the very top, where a council of advisors report directly to the Chief Executive on matters relating to innovation and technology Hong Kong is proactively creating and managing talent and innovation.



- [Key Centres for R&D Activities](#)
- [Government Assistance](#)



Key Centres for R&D Activities

The Hong Kong Government has supported the creation of several facilities catering to the needs of R&D enterprises. The most significant of these are:

- [Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute Company Limited \(ASTRI\)](#)
- [Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation \(HKSTP\)](#)
- [Cyberport](#)

Furthermore, Hong Kong has 11 degree-awarding **higher education institutions**. Eight are publicly funded and offer over 14,000 first-year first degree places. Degrees up to doctorate level are offered, with many being widely recognised by institutions of higher learning around the world. Many universities encompass a research centre, that work with commercial bodies across a wide range of specialisms, as well as receive funding from the government.

Related Links

- [ASTRI](#)
- [Hong Kong Science and Technology Park](#)
- [Hong Kong Jockey Club Institute of Chinese Medicine](#)
- [Cyberport](#)





Government Assistance

In keeping with the level playing field approach of the Hong Kong government, overseas investors who own Hong Kong incorporated companies are treated like their local counterparts and are eligible to apply for a few grants (and loans) that are available when specific criteria are met. Many of these grants are in the technology sector.

The key support programmes are:

DesignSmart Initiative

Set up to strengthen support for the design and innovation industries there are four elements:

1. Design-business collaboration scheme - aims to promote collaboration between design and SMEs
2. Design-research scheme - aims to support worthwhile research in design or branding-related areas.
3. General Support Scheme - aims to promote and honour design excellence in Hong Kong.
4. Professional Continuing Education Scheme - aims to develop professional continuing education courses in design and its application.

Small Entrepreneur Research Assistance Programme

Aims to help technology-based, entrepreneur-driven companies carry out business research at the pre-venture capital stage.

Patent Application Grant

All applications for functional patents and inventions (except cosmetic designs) are eligible for this grant.

Teaching Company Scheme

Aims to foster university-industry partnership through subsidising the cost of graduate students engaged from local universities to undertake proprietary R&D work.

New Technology Training Scheme



Intended to provide financial assistance to companies in Hong Kong wishing to have their staff trained, locally or overseas, in a new technology that would be useful to their business.

Hong Kong - Guangdong joint R&D fund

In keeping with the general trend in Hong Kong and the Mainland forging stronger economic ties, another fund was established that is jointly funded by the Hong Kong Government and the government of Guangdong Province (the area in mainland China just over the border from Hong Kong).

The fund will provide support to universities, research institutions and private enterprises to conduct applied R&D in six technology areas: radio frequency identification (RFID) technologies; automotive parts and accessory systems; electronic and information technology; new materials and fine chemical processing; critical precision manufacturing equipment; and new energy and energy-saving related technologies.

Related Links

-  [Innovation and Technology Fund](#)
-  [DesignSmart](#)
-  [Funding leaflet from HKSARG](#)
-  [Hong Kong - Guangdong joint R&D fund](#)



- ▶ International Transport
- ▶ Transport within Hong Kong
- ▶ Telecommunications
- ▶ Postal Services

Transport and Communications

Located at the hub of the Asia-Pacific region, Hong Kong has an extensive and efficient network of air and sea transport links and comprehensive and low cost communication channels with the rest of the world.

With its efficient, good value and reliable local transport and infrastructure Hong Kong feels even more compact and convenient. Nowhere is ever out of reach.

- International transport
- Transport within Hong Kong
- Telecommunications
- Post

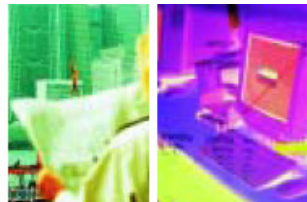
30%
of mainland China's foreign trade
is dispatched through Hong Kong

21,980,000 TEUs
shipped in 2004 making Hong Kong
the world's busiest container port

2004 air cargo passing through Hong
Kong the top international handler
since 1996, soared to

3,090,000 tonnes





International Transport

Location, location, location! Hong Kong is not only sitting at the door of the world's biggest latent market as it develops, it is within 5 hours flying time of half the world's population. Hong Kong's connectivity is maintained as second to none, so the city fully capitalises on its physical location through its roles in supply chains, and as a service centre and tourism hotspot.

For more details about the superlatives of Hong Kong's transportation sector, click [here](#)

- [Air transport](#)
- [Sea transport](#)
- [Hong Kong/Mainland](#)

Related Links

- More details about the superlatives of Hong Kong's transportation sector



Air Transport

The Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) is consistently ranked as one of, if not the top airport in the world. Based at Chek Lap Kok, on the island of Lantau, it is also one of the most convenient city airports, being a 3 stop-35km-23 minute train journey away from the heart of the city on the Airport Express.

Over 72 international airlines fly from Chek Lap Kok (airport abbreviation HKG), providing over 4,700 flights per week to some 130 locations. This includes a non-stop service between the east coast of US and Hong Kong - the New York-Hong Kong flight is one of the longest commercial routes in the world and has a scheduled flying time of just under 16 hours!




Hong Kong's flagship people carrier is Cathay Pacific (flight prefix CX), which has a comprehensive regional and international service.

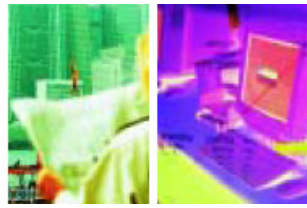
Budget airlines are a relatively new phenomenon in Asia, and to date only a few have incorporated Hong Kong in their flight schedules.

Flying in Asia is particularly cheap the further in advance you book and if you travel in off peak season. It is possible to provisionally book tickets and then decide nearer the time whether you require the flights. Flights around peak times, like around general holidays, get fully booked well in advance. Organisation and forward planning is key!

In terms of cargo, HKIA is also one of the busiest airlines in the world in terms of international air cargo. Furthermore, there are plans to triple the annual cargo capacity to 9 million tonnes.

Related Links

-  [Hong Kong International Airport](#)
-  [Cathay Pacific](#)
-  [Dragonair](#)



Sea Transport

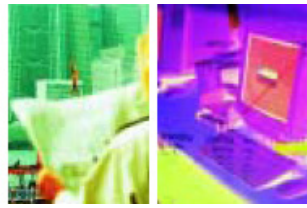
In the past few years Hong Kong has more often than not been the busiest port in the world. The volume of ocean-going and river vessel traffic in Hong Kong is huge, with one arrival or departure almost every minute.

This affords those who need to ship items great efficiency, flexibility and economies of scale. For example, given the volume handled by Hong Kong and the vast range of destinations served expensive partial container shipments are seldom an issue.

There are currently nine fully operational container terminals. Further expansion plans are in the pipeline.

Related Links

-  [Hong Kong Port Development Council](#)



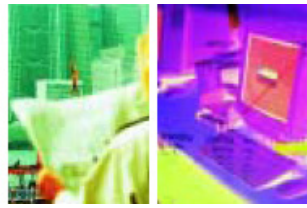
Hong Kong/Mainland

Besides direct flights between Hong Kong and some 40 cities in the Mainland, there are several daily through trains to and from various commercial centres just over the border (like Guangzhou and Dongguan and Foshan) and further afield like Shanghai and Beijing.

Hong Kong's flagship carrier, Cathay Pacific, is associated with Dragonair (flight prefix KA), an airline serving many destinations in China and Asia. There are several other airlines serving China, with varying levels of tailoring for the overseas business executive.

Road connections between Hong Kong and the rest of southern China are improving with the development of new roads like the Guangzhou-Shenzhen Superhighway. It currently takes three hours to drive from Hong Kong to Guangzhou, although this will shorten considerably once the planned Hong Kong - Zhuhai - Macau Bridge is complete (construction is due to start in 2006).

There are frequent scheduled ferry services and cruise liners between Hong Kong and cities in the Mainland, both those up the Pearl River (like Guangzhou, Zhuhai and Shekou) and those along the coast, like Xiamen and Shanghai.



Transport within Hong Kong

Transport within Hong Kong is easy and affordable. Schedules are generally frequent, punctual and reliable. And like the Star Ferry, Peak Tram and trams on Hong Kong island, when they are not super fast, they are full of charm and elegance - a throw back to years gone by.

Train

The principal and largely underground commuter train is the Mass Transit Railway or so-called [MTR](#). There are six lines, one of which only serves Hong Kong Island and has several tunnel connections underneath the harbour to Kowloon and beyond, to the New Territories and Lantau.

The MTR line that serves the airport is the Airport Express. It is a high speed 35km and 3 stop service from the airport on Lantau to the heart of Hong Kong Island's business district that takes 23 minutes. A businessman's dream! It is not uncommon for individuals to be at home within 90 minutes of touchdown!

To access the border with Mainland China, you need to take the Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR). Cutting through from its north and south extremities at the border and harbour, this line also serves commuters who live in more remote Hong Kong.

Tram

Hong Kong has two tram systems:

- The world famous, and over 100 year old Peak Tram - a funicular railway that goes up to near the top of Victoria Peak.
- A network of electric trams that serve various routes on Hong Kong Island.

Ferries

Hong Kong has a full timetable of boats serving many of its over 200 islands. Not to forget its timeless classic, tourist favourite and Hong Kong icon, the Star Ferry.

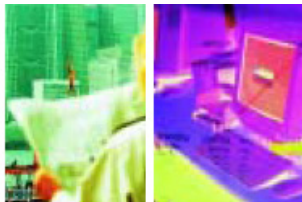
Road

Hong Kong boasts some 2,000km of roads. Many taxis, buses and light buses operate good value journeys on these routes so that no corner of Hong Kong is ever inaccessible or too expensive to reach.

Related Links

- 📄 [MTR](#)
- 📄 [Getting around in Hong Kong](#)





Telecommunications

Hong Kong's telecommunications infrastructure is one of the most technically advanced in the world. Facilities and services have great reach and take up rates. For example virtually all commercial buildings and households can have broadband coverage.

Hong Kong is Asia's regional telecommunications hub due to a fully liberalised and open market plus effective regulatory regime resulting in real choices for users and consumers with competitive prices for top quality services.

For more about the superlatives of Hong Kong's telecommunications sector, click [here](#).

Local network

The local fixed telephone network in Hong Kong is completely digitalised. There are five companies operating (telecom operators offering) local telephone services: PCCW HKT Limited, Hutchison Global Communications Limited, Wharf T&T Hong Kong Limited, New World Telecommunications Limited and Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited. Three of these local operators offering triple-play services of telephony, broadband Internet access (up to 10 Mbit / sec) and IP TV services at very affordable costs.

Telecommunications connections can be installed in less than a week and there is a one off installation fee. All local business and residential fixed services are based on flat rates per month. Mandatory number portability for both mobile and fixed services enables users to feely switch service providers.

Dialling overseas

The international direct dial service in Hong Kong is among the most economical in the world.

IDD service now connects Hong Kong to more than 230 countries around the world and over 1,300 cities in the Mainland China.

With the liberalisation of the IDD service market, international calls have become even cheaper in Hong Kong. To make a call to the US, the charge is less than HK\$1 per minute!

Mobiles

Three of the four 3G licensees have already launched services and the costs of service plans are quite affordable due to the competitive environment in Hong Kong.

There are more mobile phone subscriptions in Hong Kong, than there are people! It is very much the norm for all adults and even older children to have some form of mobile communication.

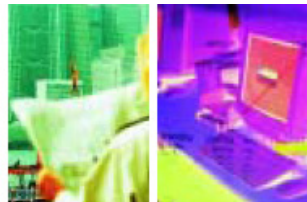
Hong Kongers are early adopters for the latest models in handsets and services. All consumers are therefore spoiled for choice.

Other telecommunication services such as paging and value-added network services are provided by a number of operators at competitive prices.

Related Links

-  [Hong Kong's telecommunications sector](#)





Postal Services

Hong Kong's postal service is very fast, efficient, reliable, and among the least expensive in the world. With a strap line "Linking People, Delivering Business" Hongkong Post aims to deliver letters to local addresses or air carriers by the following working day.

Hongkong Post operates different tariffs for mail and parcels including local surface, airmail, circular service, courier service and local bulk mail.

They also operate a service called PostalPlus aimed at the local and international mailing needs of SMEs.

Besides Hongkong Post, many international couriers operate speedy delivery service in Hong Kong at competitive prices.

Related Links

-  [Hongkong Post](#)

