

Protocol Tips

Greetings

Chinese people often greet each other with a nod or a slight bow, but a handshake is quite acceptable. *Ni Hao* is the standard greeting at any time of the day, often said twice. Business cards should be printed with Chinese on one side and presented with both hands, Chinese side up.

It is appropriate to make your position or status clear, even though the Chinese may avoid identifying themselves precisely.

The Justice System

When in China, you are subject to Chinese laws and are not entitled to any special protection or consideration because of your Canadian citizenship.

The administration of justice is substantially different in China. In general, police and other officials have more discretionary power than their Canadian counterparts. A lawyer does not have the same advocacy role as in Canada, and the rights of accused persons are more limited. In civil matters, claims of unstated intent may take precedence over written contract terms. Detention during the investigative period before charges are laid is common and can be lengthy.

If you are arrested or detained, you can request that the arresting officer inform the Canadian embassy or nearest consulate, provided that you have entered China as a Canadian citizen. You will need a Chinese lawyer. Canadian officials can provide a list of lawyers who speak English and have experience working in the local court system.

Meanwhile, be aware that what you say can be used against you. Avoid making any arrangements with police or court officials unless your lawyer is present. Sentences will be served in a local prison.

Communications

The telephone system in China is still not up to world standards, but it is improving rapidly. The best place to make phone calls is in your hotel, especially if it is a modern one. Cellular phones are readily available and are becoming very common as prices drop. Canada Direct service is available from some major cities in China by calling 108-186.

Most of the major international courier companies operate in China. Internet service is available but is subject to certain government restrictions. The larger modern hotels have business centres that can provide translation, fax and printing services.