

After seven years of continuous residency under Conditional Stay status, you can apply for Unconditional Stay status or the Right of Abode. The Unconditional Stay relieves you of the need to periodically renew residence and work permits. This is an administrative measure that does not convey any legal right to stay, and it can be revoked at the discretion of the Director of Immigration.

The Right of Abode

Persons holding Right of Abode status cannot be deported. The law concerning the Right of Abode treats individuals differently depending on their ethnic background. Canadians of Chinese descent who were born in Hong Kong may be considered Chinese citizens. They have the Right of Abode in the HKSAR immediately. Canadians of Chinese descent who were born elsewhere have the Right of Abode after seven continuous years of residence. The required residency may be at any time in the past and does not have to immediately precede the claim to Right of Abode status.

Persons deemed not to be of Chinese nationality can qualify for the Right of Abode if they entered Hong Kong on a valid travel document and have ordinarily resided there for seven continuous years immediately prior to applying to become a permanent

resident. The period of continuous residence can be before or after the establishment of the HKSAR.

Once you have acquired the Right of Abode, you are entitled to enter Hong Kong without conditions, to vote, to run for election and to occupy certain civil positions reserved for permanent residents. You can also apply for an HKSAR passport.

The Right to Land

Persons who have previously held the right of permanent residency in Hong Kong, but who do not qualify for the Right of Abode, are entitled to the statutory Right to Land. This category applies to Canadians who previously lived in Hong Kong, but were not resident there for seven continuous years immediately prior to seeking entry into the HKSAR. Persons holding the Right to Land are entitled to enter Hong Kong without restrictions, but do not have political rights and can be deported for serious offences.

Work Permits

To obtain a work permit, you must normally be sponsored by a Hong Kong employer. The sponsoring employer usually handles the application to the HKSAR Immigration Department, and the process generally takes six to eight weeks.