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# **China, Peoples Republic of**

## **Market Development Reports**

### **Business Travel in China**

### **2002**

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#### **Report Highlights:**

**China, as the world's most populous country, has quickly become an important market for many U.S. businesses. USDA/FAS representatives in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou warmly welcome U.S. agricultural exporters to China and have prepared this introduction to give business travelers the knowledge and confidence to explore China as a market for U.S. products.**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

China is the world's most populous country, with approximately 1.25 billion people living in a land area slightly larger than the United States. China has rapidly become an important market for many U.S. businesses, with its cheap labor and vast potential markets being the largest draws. Each day, the nation that is home for almost one-quarter of the world's population greets business travelers seeking new export markets. In an effort to promote U.S. agricultural products in China, the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) has established an Agricultural Affairs Office in Beijing and three Agricultural Trade Offices (ATO), one each in Shanghai, Guangzhou, and recently, a new ATO in Beijing. FAS/USDA representatives warmly welcome U.S. agricultural exporters to China and have prepared this introduction to give business travelers the knowledge and confidence to explore China as a market for U.S. products.

Many business travelers are hosted by Chinese government officials or companies. However, since China has opened its doors to the Western world, it is very convenient to travel to China on your own. What's more important is to understand that travel in China is quite different from business travel to more developed areas of the world. Planning is key, since you may not be able to count on access to basic services like travel agents, convenient and reliable communications lines and overnight delivery. This introduction offers basic information about travel in China that will help you plan your trip.

## II. BEFORE YOU GO

### Searching information on Internet

Internet is the quickest and most convenient way to learn about China before you go; there are many excellent websites to choose from. For daily business and political news, check out the China section of the Hong Kong-based "South China Morning Post" (<http://www.scmp.com>) or the "Hong Kong Standard" (<http://www.hkstandard.com>). Dow-Jones publishes a respected news weekly entitled "Far Eastern Economic Review", which has insightful articles and good features on the business climate in China: (<http://www.feer.com>.) There are also some well-known travel guides which publish portions on the web, such as the Lonely Planet series. While their series is aimed more at the backpacker-style of travel, there is a wealth of pertinent information on local customs, regional weather patterns, and useful phrases: (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>.) Another site which has some excellent government and business links is Surf China: (<http://www.surfchina.com>.) We also suggest you to visit ChinaSite.com which is one of the most popular web site directories, and an index for China/Chinese related resources on the Internet. This site is expanding its business to become a premier brand name global Chinese portal and E-Commerce site.

Here is a list of some other useful sites:

<b>Shanghai</b> -	Shanghai Municipal Govt.:	<a href="http://www.shanghai.gov.cn">http://www.shanghai.gov.cn</a>
	Agricultural Trade Office, Shanghai:	<a href="http://www.atoshanghai.org">http://www.atoshanghai.org</a>
	American Chamber of Commerce:	<a href="http://www.amcham-shanghai.org">http://www.amcham-shanghai.org</a>
	That's Shanghai	<a href="http://www.thatsShanghai.com">http://www.thatsShanghai.com</a>

Information/Entertainment:	<a href="http://www.shanghabc.com">http://www.shanghabc.com</a>
<b>Beijing</b> - American Embassy:	<a href="http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn">http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn</a>
American Chamber of Commerce, Beijing:	<a href="http://www.amcham-china.org.cn">http://www.amcham-china.org.cn</a>
Ministry of Foreign Trade (MOFTEC):	<a href="http://www.moftec.gov.cn">http://www.moftec.gov.cn</a>
Entertainment/dining:	<a href="http://www.bejingscene.com">http://www.bejingscene.com</a>

### **How to obtain the Chinese visa**

Traveling in China requires a valid U.S. passport and a tourist or business visa.

There are several situations as follows:

- If traveling to China for only a period of days or weeks, we suggest you apply for a tourist visa at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., or at one of the Chinese consulates in New York, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles or San Francisco. A valid passport and two 2x2 pictures and appropriate fee should accompany the application, available from the embassy, consulate or travel service.

Jurisdiction Areas of the Chinese Embassy and Consulates in the United States:

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Los Angeles:

Jurisdiction Area: Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, Hawaii, US territories in the Pacific Islands

443 Shatto Place, Suite 300, Los Angeles, California 90020

Phone: (213) 380-2506 (recorded messages), (213) 807-8018 (live person available from 2-4 PM),

Fax: (213) 380-1961

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in San Francisco:

Jurisdiction Area: Northern California, Oregon, Nevada, Washington, Alaska

1450 Laguna Street, San Francisco, California 94115

Tel: (415) 563-4857, Fax: (415) 563-0494

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Houston:

Jurisdiction Area: Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, and Oklahoma

3417 Montrose Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77006

Tel: (713) 524-4311, Fax: (713) 524-7656

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in New York:

Jurisdiction Area: New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Ohio, New Jersey

520 12th. Avenue, New York, New York 10036

Tel: (212) 330-7409, Fax: (212) 502-0245

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Chicago:

Jurisdiction Area: Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Michigan  
100 W. Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610  
Tel: (312) 803-0095, Fax: (312) 803-0122

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Washington:

Jurisdiction Area: All other states and areas in the United States  
2300 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington DC 20008  
Tel: (202) 328-2517, Fax: (202) 328-2564

- If you enter China with a stopover in Hong Kong, you can apply for a P.R.C. visa at the Chinese Foreign Affairs Visa Application Office (CFAVAO) in Hong Kong. In addition, most major Hong Kong hotels offer P.R.C. visa application assistance for an additional fee, but travelers should check with their hotel in advance. Visa processing in Hong Kong usually takes one to two working days, however express service is also available. One hour express tourist visa issuance is available for HK \$410 (single entry) and HK \$460 (double entry). This visa is valid for entry during a three month period for a stay of up to one month. In addition, one working day visa issuance service is available for tourist visas for HK \$260 (single entry) and HK \$310 (double entry). This visa is valid for entry during a three month period for a stay of up to one month.

CFAVAO is located at 5/F Lower Block, China Resources Building, 26 Harbour View Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong, tel. (852) 2585-1794 or (852) 2827-1881. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 9:00am to 12:30pm, and Monday through Friday, 2:00pm - 5:00pm.

- If you need to stay in China for more than a month and are clearly working in an office as an employee, then it is best to apply for a business (F-type) visa. Business visa applications require a letter of invitation which can be faxed from a China-based company or Chinese government office. It may also help to take evidence of your Chinese business connection. If you request a multiple entry visa that is valid for six months, it allows you to stay in China between 30 and 60 days each entry.

## **Climate**

China's latitude and broad range of climates is similar to the United States. The north is characterized by aridity and dry plains, while the south is characterized by high humidity and lush greenery. The north tends to have extremely cold, dry winters, while winters are wetter south of Shanghai. Summer weather in most of China can be unpleasantly hot and unpredictable. The best times to visit tend to be spring and fall, although fall weather tends to be more pleasant and reliable. Book air travel well in advance, as spring, end of summer, and fall tend to be the busiest travel seasons in China.

## **Medical/Health**

While many business travelers have successfully ventured in and out of China without regard for medical considerations, U.S. health officials recommend - but do not require - the following vaccinations: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis B, and typhoid (capsules or injection). In addition, make sure you have not tested positive for tuberculosis, and your Tetanus (good for 5 to 10 years), and polio (good for 10 years) vaccinations are current. If you plan to travel in remote areas, a rabies vaccination is recommended and, for travel in subtropical areas during the summer, also bring malaria medication. The availability of quality health care for international travelers has improved remarkably in recent years with the opening of many clinics staffed by foreign doctors catering to foreigners. The below listed centers can provide a first point of contact for travelers with illness:

**Beijing** - Beijing United Family Hospital  
Tel: (86-10) 6433-3960  
Fax: (86-10) 6433-3963  
  
Beijing AEA International Clinic and Alarm Center  
Tel: (86-10) 6462-9112  
Fax: (86-10) 6462-9111  
  
International Medical Center  
Tel: (86-10) 6465-1561  
Fax: (86-10) 6465-1961  
  
Beijing Ambulance Service  
Tel: (86-10) 6525-5678  
  
Peking Union Medical Hospital  
Tel: (86-10) 6529-5269

**Shanghai** - Worldlink Clinic  
Tel: (86-21) 6279-7688

**Guangzhou** - SOS Clinic  
Tel: (86-20)8735-1051/1240/1843  
Fax: (86-20)8735-2045  
  
Sun Yatsen Memorial Hospital  
Tel: (86-20)8133-2469  
  
Guangdong Concord Medical Center  
Tel: (86-20)8387-4283  
  
Guangdong Provincial People's Hospital  
Tel: (86-20)8382-7812

## Safety

China is a relatively safe country. However there are still several points that we would like to remind you of:

- Please take great care when you cross the roads. This is due to the general chaos on the streets, exacerbated by poor street lighting, inadequate signage and few crossing points.
- Violent crime is a rarity, but theft is still a social problem, especially in the three biggest cities ( Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou). So be careful, and don't become a target for thieves and pickpockets.
- Prostitution is on the increase along with associated diseases. The best advice is better safe than sorry.

- Valuables should be locked in a hotel safe.

### III. GETTING THERE

It is not difficult to get to China nowadays. Currently, however, only two U.S. passenger airlines (United and Northwest) are authorized to fly to mainland China. Flights are available to Beijing and Shanghai. If UA and Northwest are fully booked, consider taking Air China, China Eastern or China Southern from the West Coast of the U.S. All three fly to the states and many leading Asian destinations such as Tokyo, Seoul, and Singapore. China Southern offers direct flight service between Guangzhou and Los Angeles, while Air China and China Eastern fly from Shanghai to San Francisco and Los Angeles. Check with your travel agent to make sure that they can issue a boarding pass for Chinese airlines or domestic connection flights within China. On code share flights, such as Northwest/Air China, this should not be a problem, as long as your domestic connections are on Air China's scheduled flights.

Hong Kong offers a wider variety of transport options particularly to cities in Guangdong and to Macao: to Guangzhou by air (25 minutes), train (3 hours) or express bus; to Shenzhen by express bus and light rail; and by ferry, catamaran, or hydrofoil to Zhuhai and Macau.

Domestic travel within China is possible only on Chinese-owned carriers or via special charter. Booking tickets in the USA for domestic flights in China has become much easier than in the past. Check with your travel agent in the USA; many can purchase these tickets for you. Your hotel or a travel agent in China should also be able to do this. There is a departure tax of RMB50 (about US \$6) at the airport for all domestic flights and do remember to take your passport.

The Foreign Agricultural Service has also identified local travel agents in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. These travel agents are business-oriented with experience assisting business travelers with logistical arrangements all over China, such as hotel accommodations, air and rail ticketing, transfers, English speaking translators, tour guides and pre/post business meeting sightseeing tours. As a U.S. Government agency, we cannot guarantee the reliability of each of these companies in every situation, but many business travelers have used these companies successfully in the recent past.

- Beijing** - Beijing Tradewinds Services Co.,Ltd.  
Contact: Mr. Frederick Ip  
Tel:(86-10)65171886; Fax: (86-10)65171792; Cell phone: 13901387661  
E-mail: bjsaa@263.net  
BTG F.I.T.TOURS  
Contact: Ms. Zhao Yu Mei  
Tel: (86-10)65158565;65158844 ext.2104; Fax:(86-10)65158192; Cell phone: 13501035004  
E-mail: tour@163bj.com
- Shanghai** - Great West Corp. Ltd.  
Contact: Ms. Rachel Wang  
Tel: (86-21) 6279-8489; Fax: (86-21) 6279-8488  
Email: [grtwest@public.sta.net.cn](mailto:grtwest@public.sta.net.cn)  
Shanghai China International Travel Service Co., Ltd.  
Contact: Ms. Jin Lan  
Tel: (86-21)62898279; Fax: (86-21)62897838

Shanghai CYTS Corporation, Euro-American Department

Contact: Ms. Chen Lian

Tel: (86-21) 6433-1322; Fax: (86-21) 6437-0041

Email: [cyts@public.sta.net.cn](mailto:cyts@public.sta.net.cn)

**Guangzhou** -

Fantasy Holiday

Contact person: Karen Liang

Tel: (86-20)8387-4439

Westminster Travel Ltd.

Contact person: Chinky Tam

Tel: (86-20)8387-7706

Polo air Travel Ltd.

Contact person: Huang, Xiao Hong

Tel: (86-20)8761-1983

#### IV. HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

In some larger cities like Beijing, Shanghai or Guangzhou, you may find a large choice of accommodations from truly full service five-star hotels to much more modest and also economical options. Hotels that have less than a three-star rating are not recommended for business travelers. Most non-Chinese-speaking Americans prefer four or five-star hotels, not only because of the amenities, but also because of the presence of some English-speaking staff and good facilities.

##### **Leading Hotels in Shanghai:**

<u>Properties</u>	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>Fax(+21)</u>	<u>Web-site</u>
Four Seasons Hotel	6256-8888	6256-5678	<a href="http://www.fourseasons.com">www.fourseasons.com</a>
Garden Hotel	6415-1111	6415-8866	<a href="http://www.gardenhotelshanghai.com">www.gardenhotelshanghai.com</a>
Grand Hyatt (Pudong)	5049-1234	5049-1111	<a href="http://www.hyatt.com">www.hyatt.com</a>
Hilton	6248-0000	6248-3848	<a href="http://www.hilton.com">www.hilton.com</a>
Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza	6280-8888	6280-3353	<a href="http://www.crowneplaza-shanghai.com">www.crowneplaza-shanghai.com</a>
JC Mandarin	6279-1888	6279-2314	<a href="http://www.jcmandarin.com">www.jcmandarin.com</a>
New Asia Tomson (Pudong)	5831-8888	5831-7777	<a href="http://www.nathsha.com">www.nathsha.com</a>
Portman Ritz-Carlton	6279-8888	6279-7014	<a href="http://www.ritzcarlton.com">www.ritzcarlton.com</a>
Regal International Hotel	6415-5588	6445-8899	<a href="http://www.regal-hotels.com">www.regal-hotels.com</a>
Shangri-La (Pudong)	6882-8888	6882-6688	<a href="http://www.shangrila.com">www.shangrila.com</a>
St. Regis Hotel	5050-4567	5820-7603	<a href="http://www.stregis.com">www.stregis.com</a>
Westin Taipingyang	6275-8888	6275-5420	<a href="http://www.westin.com">www.westin.com</a>

## Reservations

For information about hotels in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, you may contact the FAS Agricultural Trade Office representatives in those cities.

<b><u>Beijing</u></b> -	Agricultural Affairs Office Tel: (86-10) 6532-1953 ext.300 Fax: (86-10) 6532-2962
<b><u>Shanghai</u></b> -	Agricultural Trade Office Tel: (86-21) 6279-8622 Fax: (86-21) 6279-8336
<b><u>Guangzhou</u></b> -	Agricultural Trade Office Tel: (86-20) 8666-0826 or 8667-7553 Fax: (86-20) 8666-0703

Travelers to other cities in China may wish to explore booking accommodations with one of the well-known international chain properties (Hilton, Holiday Inn, Inter-Continental, Shangri-La, Sheraton, etc.) or may contact CITS or a local travel agent identified by FAS. (See previous section for phone and fax numbers.) Since 1998, the Holiday Inn, Shangri-La, and Sheraton chains have expanded rapidly in China and now manage hotels in many of the top twenty cities. It is now relatively easy to call the toll free numbers for these chains in America to make reservations in many cities throughout China.

## V. WHAT TO BRING

### Clothing

Depending on where in China you plan to travel, you will find a wide variance in climate and temperature. Latitudes are comparable to North America so seasons will be similar. Expect hot rainy conditions in extreme south China beginning in March, while typhoon season generally runs from July through September.

While business dress is generally less formal than in major U.S. cities, most Westerners wear standard business attire for business meetings and dinners. Also bring comfortable shoes since you may do a fair amount of walking.

### Electrical Adapter Kit

Not only is the standard electric current different in China (220 volts, versus 110 volts in the U.S.), so are the outlets. In fact, you may find more than one type in the same hotel room. Unfortunately none will accept the standard U.S. two- or three-pronged plugs. Bathrooms in larger hotels in major cities have built-in converters for shavers. Beyond that, if you consider your hair dryer, laptop computer or other travel appliances necessities, arrive in China equipped with appropriate converters and adapters.

### Metric Conversion Calculator or Chart

China uses the metric system for all weights and measures, including temperature. If you are not familiar with metric measures, a pocket conversion calculator or chart will come in handy.

### **Cash or Travelers Checks and a Money Belt**

Bring cash or travelers checks. Credit card acceptance is growing; and the most common credit cards are accepted at major hotels, hotel restaurants, branches of Friendship Stores, government-run antique and handicraft stores, and in factory sales rooms that deal with foreign tourists. However, if you plan to travel outside the major cities, or dine and shop outside the larger hotels, you will need plenty of cash, which will be safest if carried in a money belt. Travelers checks can be converted to local currency at most hotels and at branches of the Bank of China. (See "MONEY" and "SAFETY" for more information.)

### **Business cards and mementos**

It would be most helpful to bring Chinese-English bilingual business cards. And, after your meetings with the Chinese, it's a nice gesture to offer a small company-related or USA memento (e.g. pens, caps, mugs).

### **Product Samples**

Bring product sample, especially for new to market items, although product pictures are a good alternative if you can't bring samples. It is extremely rare for foreigners' ordinary luggage to be searched upon arrival at airports in China. Therefore, business travelers should bring small quantities of product samples packed inside their regular tourist luggage (not packed in cardboard boxes). Additionally, many U.S. companies have successfully shipped a box or two of samples and brochures via DHL, FedEx or other carrier to a Chinese address. We don't recommend shipping samples by air freight on commercial carriers. If there is no alternative, then make sure to write the following on the invoice: "No Commercial value, Not dangerous, Sample only," and make sure that the price of the sample is marked zero, no commercial value. Otherwise a lot of problems can occur, such as delays, tax assessments, or other bureaucratic hassles.

## **VI. ARRIVING IN CHINA**

Chinese authorities require all foreign visitors to undergo passport, health, and customs formalities prior to entering the country. The process is simple and involves completing brief forms provided by most international airlines prior to landing. If you do not receive these forms, they will be available near the arrival gates at the airport.

Health Declaration Form - must be filled out by all foreign visitors and handed to officials at special counters in each airport.

Entry-Exit Form - required of visitors not traveling with a group. Handed to immigration officials along with the passport at border control counters in each airport.

Customs procedures have been simplified. Only visitors with large amounts of cash, commercial samples, office

equipment (not just a single laptop computer) have to complete the Customs Declaration Form at the airport. If you must fill out the form, retain the stamped copy until you leave China, for checking by Customs officials.

All baggage must be x-rayed at some ports of entry before you will be allowed to carry it through Customs. Beyond this, only periodic spot-checking of luggage occurs.

## **VII. MONEY**

Unless your transportation from the airport is arranged by your host in China, you will need to change some money at the airport in order to get a taxi to your destination.

The official Chinese currency is the Renminbi (RMB). The basic unit of currency is the yuan. Each yuan is divided into 10 jiao. Each jiao is divided into 10 fen. Yuan notes are issued in denominations of 100, 50, 10, 5, 2 and 1. There is also a 1-Yuan coin. Jiao and fen are issued in both paper currency and coins in denominations of 5, 2, and 1 each.

The RMB is not traded on international markets. It can be bought or exchanged within China and Hong Kong and along some northwestern borders. It is also possible to purchase some RMB from currency exchange windows in American airports, but the rate is particularly unfavorable and shouldn't be considered under normal circumstances. Any RMB you have left should be converted before leaving the country. Make sure you keep enough to pay for transportation to the airport and the required departure tax. (See "LEAVING CHINA".)

Current exchange rates are published in the China Daily. This rate applies in all banks, hotels, airport and retail (Friendship Store) exchange counters. Travelers checks bring a slightly better rate, however some banks and hotels add a small fee, which may offset the advantage. In recent years, the currency has been very stable against the US dollar, U.S. \$1= RMB8.265.

You may be approached on the street by people offering to "change your money" at a better rate. FAS does not recommend that you try this due to "sleight of hand" tactics and counterfeiting. There is also the occasional crackdown on black market money changers often found loitering within a few feet of bank entrances, so it is prudent to avoid the practice altogether.

Banking hours are generally 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays, and 8 to 11:30 a.m. on Saturdays. Hotel exchange counters are open longer, seven days a week.

## **VIII. GETTING AROUND - TRANSPORTATION WITHIN MAJOR CITIES**

The easiest way to get around Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai and other major business centers is by taxi or hired car. You can arrange taxi or car service through the concierge at most major hotels. In most cities, you can also hail a cab on the street. If you're traveling on your own, consider picking up a recent English/Chinese bilingual map, available in most hotels.

Taxis in most cities are metered, but the quality of service varies depending on the size of the city. Furthermore, drivers do not generally speak English. Unless you speak fluent Mandarin, ask the hotel concierge to provide a card that shows the name of your destination and your hotel in Chinese characters. Keep the card and use it when you want to

return. Taxis usually charge by distance and time taken, so check that the driver has turned on the meter at the beginning of each trip. Traveling between 11pm and 5am will result in a 25% surcharge. On arrival, ask for a receipt. You are less likely to be cheated if you get in a taxi at the taxi stand in front of a major hotel, particularly if the doorman gives you a card with the taxi's license plate number.

Be advised: Due to the terrible traffic situation during rush hours (8:00-9:00 a.m. and 5:00 -7:00 p.m.), leave early for your destination; getting there could take longer than you think.

## **IX. LANGUAGE**

Mandarin Chinese is the official language of China. However, in some areas, people speak a local dialect or a regional language (Cantonese, Shanghainese, Sichuanese) which will be unrecognizable, although nearly all also speak Mandarin fluently as a second language.

The Agricultural Affairs Office, Beijing, and the ATO\*s in Shanghai and Guangzhou maintain a partial list of available translation services.

Consider carrying a small traveler\*s guide to Chinese words and phrases -- a good primer for learning to speak a few civilities like "thank you" (*xie xie* in pinyin, pronounced like "shay-shay"), "hello" (*nin hao* in pinyin, pronounced like "neen how").

## **X. WATER**

It is not advisable to drink tap water in China. Most hotels supply bottled water or boiled hot water in a thermos. Distilled and mineral water in plastic bottles can be found in most cities at a reasonable price.

## **XI. TIPPING**

With the great influx of foreign travelers to China, the practice of tipping is on the increase. Many hotel restaurants add a 15% service charge to the bill. In most other instances, tipping is not expected and may cause embarrassment for the staff. However, in the most developed coastal cities if you tip a bartender or waiter, they are unlikely to refuse.

## **XII. KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH HOME**

### **Phone**

Domestic and international long distance calls can often be made through direct dialing or booked through your hotel. Most major hotels in larger cities will add the charges to your hotel bill, however, some business travelers report having to pay for the calls immediately after they are completed. If you are unable to place a long distance call from your room, even when such services are noted in hotel literature, contact the front desk or operator and tell them you wish to have your room phone reconnected to long distance service. Some hotels turn off long distance service to unoccupied rooms and forget to reconnect promptly once a guest has checked in.

Collect calls are much cheaper than direct calls from China. Because of the changing rates, the least expensive method

for placing phone calls varies. Currently, the AT&T, MCI and Sprint cost-per-minute for calls to the United States that are longer than a few minutes is substantially less than the Chinese rate.

IDD (International direct dial) and DDD (domestic direct dial) phones, fax, international/domestic post, telex and telegraph are available at the better hotels or the local Post & telecommunications offices. Check costs, minimum connection time, fax paper charge and service charges when calling or faxing from a hotel.

If you have an international calling card with one of the major long distance carriers, check with your representative before you go about the most economical rates and method of calling. Calls to China from the United States are usually less expensive than calls from China to the United States.

Another option is the recent arrival of the IP Telephony card, which must be purchased from a domestic telecom provider for use within China. The card functions for all intents and purposes like a calling card, but routes calls through the Internet, thus allowing significant savings for a minor reduction in quality. International calls cost approximately \$.60/minute and the cards are available in denominations up to RMB500 (approx. \$60). Ask the hotel concierge or have a Chinese speaking member of your company inquire at the local phone company office.

### **News Media**

English-language media published in China includes China Daily, Beijing Review, Beijing Weekend, Shanghai Star and China Today. There are also some locally published monthly entertainment magazines geared at expatriates, and you should look for them at the concierge desk of your hotel. They include the Beijing Scene in Beijing, Shanghai Talk in Shanghai, and City Talk in Guangzhou. Many foreign newspapers (The Asian Wall Street Journal, the International Herald Tribune, USA Today) and some U.S. news magazines may be available at hotel kiosks at prices higher than in the U.S. Most major hotels in the large business centers offer at least one or two satellite television channels, such as CNN, BBC and Star TV; however, reception varies. In South China hotels carrying TVB Pearl, the CBS Evening News is broadcast live from 7:30-8:00 a.m..

### **Mail**

Airmail/domestic stamps are available at the front desk or kiosk in most major hotels. Some hotel business centers provide comprehensive letter and parcel services. Major international courier services operate in many cities; however, service takes three or four days instead of overnight. Further, they are more reliable for shipping things back to the U.S. than for getting something to China. Rule of thumb: If you need it and it cannot be sent by fax, bring it with you.

### **XIII. TIME**

All of China is in the same time zone, and referred to as "Beijing" time. Beijing time is 13 hours ahead of the east coast of the United States (EST), except during daylight savings time when the difference is 12 hours. For example, 9 a.m. in Shanghai is 8 p.m. the previous evening in New York (EST).

Chinese time is 16 hours ahead of Pacific Time.

### **XIV. BUSINESS HOURS**

Business hours vary with season and location but are normally 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon., 1:00 p.m. - 5 p.m. Use your weekends for sightseeing or report preparation and do not expect the Chinese to be anxious to give up their weekends to meet with you.

Banking hours usually run from 9am to noon and then from 1pm to 5pm, while on Saturdays hours are from 8am to 11:30am. Some banks close on Mondays. Department stores usually open at 9:00am and close around 9:00 pm.

Also, do not plan a business trip for October 1 (Chinese National Day, similar to the U.S. Fourth of July) or too close to Spring Festival (Chinese New Year, which is based on a lunar calendar and falls in mid-January to mid-February depending on the year), when much of the country shuts down for at least two weeks and the transportation networks are overloaded with people heading for home or back to work.

U.S. exporters are also discouraged from visiting Guangzhou during the twice per year (April 15-30, October 15-30) Canton Trade (Export) Fair which features mostly light industrial export items. Hotel and restaurant prices double or triple during the fairs while traffic jams worsen, meetings are difficult to arrange, and transportation in and out of the city is booked well in advance.

## **XV. LEAVING CHINA**

Make sure to confirm departure arrangements at least 72 hours before flight time. If you don't, you will risk losing your seat. The concierge at your hotel, or someone with your host group, can handle this detail.

The RMB90 airport departure fee is waived for diplomatic passport holders boarding international flights only. Non-diplomatic passport holders boarding international flights pay this fee, at booths located in the departure lobby of each airport. Your passport, boarding pass and exit form must be presented to the border control officials before you will be allowed to proceed to the gate. Expect crowds and delays each step along the way, so allow about two hours prior to your departure time for international flights.

Welcome to China! We encourage you to come over and explore this dynamic country.

(ATO Shanghai Office - October 2002)