GUIDE

How to prepare a document for apostille in Hong Kong

Four certification routes, which countries an apostille works for and where another procedure is needed, and what to ask the recipient in advance.

4 routes

who certifies the document before the apostille: the Companies Registry, the IRD, a notary, a commissioner for oaths

130 parties

to the 1961 Hague Convention — where a Hong Kong document with an apostille is accepted without legalisation

China

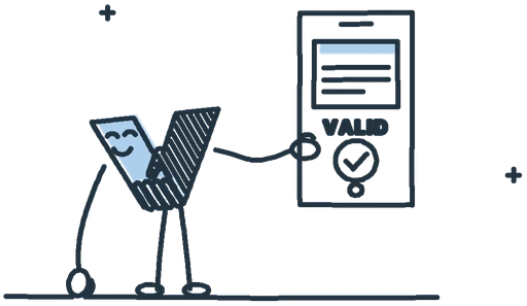
the apostille does not apply for mainland China — a separate procedure is used

Outside the convention

the UAE and other countries outside the convention — consular legalisation

What an apostille is. A standard form of authentication under the 1961 Hague Convention. It confirms the authenticity of the signature, the capacity of the signatory and their seal — **but not the content of the document**. In Hong Kong the apostille is affixed by the Registrar of the High Court (Apostille Service Office, High Court Building, 38 Queensway).

The main rule: an apostille is not placed on a plain copy. First the document is certified by a government body, a notary or a commissioner for oaths — the route depends on this.



Step 1. Choose the certification route

Whoever certified the document is shown in field 3 of the apostille (“acting in the capacity of”).

Companies Registry

Registrar of Companies

WHICH DOCUMENTS

Company documents held at the Registry: constitutional documents, filings and returns.

HOW CERTIFIED

The Registry provides a certified copy.

IMPORTANT

Field 3 of the apostille will show: Registrar of Companies.

Inland Revenue Department

IRD

WHICH DOCUMENTS

Documents from the IRD: letters, confirmations, notices.

HOW CERTIFIED

The document is signed by an authorised IRD officer.

IMPORTANT

Field 3 of the apostille will show: Commissioner of Inland Revenue.

Hong Kong notary

Notary Public

WHICH DOCUMENTS

The company’s internal documents (resolutions, powers of attorney, registers, contracts), personal documents, copies.

HOW CERTIFIED

The notary certifies the signature or that the copy is true.

IMPORTANT

Field 3 — Notary Public. If the notary certified and signed the document electronically, an electronic apostille (e-Apostille) is possible.

Commissioner for oaths

authorised to administer oaths

WHICH DOCUMENTS

Sworn statements: statutory declaration, affidavit.

HOW CERTIFIED

The declarant signs the document before a commissioner for oaths.

IMPORTANT

Field 3 of the apostille will show: Commissioner for Oaths. Suitable when the recipient needs a sworn statement.

Ask the recipient — before work starts

1. Is an original or a certified copy needed?
2. How recent must the document be?
3. Is a translation needed, and who must do it?
4. An apostille per document, per page, or one for a bound set?
5. Will an electronic apostille be accepted, or only paper?
6. Where should the original be sent?

The recipient sets the requirements for the document. If you have no answers, send us the document and the country and we will work out the route.

Step 2. Check the country

Where the document is needed decides whether it is an apostille or another procedure.

APOSTILLE Parties to the Hague Convention

Albania
Algeria[1]
Andorra
Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina
Armenia
Australia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belarus
Belgium
Belize
Bolivia
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei
Bulgaria
Burundi
Cabo Verde
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Cook Islands
Costa Rica
Croatia
Cyprus
Czechia
Denmark
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Estonia
Eswatini
Fiji
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Grenada
Guatemala
Guyana
Honduras
Hungary
Iceland
India
Indonesia
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Kazakhstan
Kosovo
Kyrgyzstan
Latvia
Lesotho
Liberia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malawi
Malta
Marshall Islands
Mauritius
Mexico
Moldova
Monaco
Mongolia
Montenegro
Morocco
Namibia
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nicaragua
Niue
North Macedonia
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Palau
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Republic of Korea
Romania
Russia
Rwanda
Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Samoa
San Marino
Sao Tome and Principe
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Serbia
Seychelles
Singapore
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Africa
Spain
Suriname
Sweden
Switzerland
Tajikistan
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom
Uruguay
USA
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Venezuela
Vietnam[2]

[1] from 09.07.2026 [2] from 11.09.2026 · **Thailand** — the convention enters into force on 28.02.2027; until then consular legalisation is needed.

OWN PROCEDURE Mainland China

China has been in the Hague Convention since 07.11.2023, but it applies between mainland China and other states. Hong Kong is part of the PRC, so **a High Court apostille on a Hong Kong document will not be accepted in mainland China.** The procedure:

1. The document is attested by a China-Appointed Attesting Officer.
2. Checking and sealing by the authorised organisation, then dispatch to China.

LEGALISATION Outside the convention

An apostille is not accepted — consular legalisation is needed:

Afghanistan
Cambodia
Egypt
Ethiopia
Ghana
Iran
Iraq
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Laos
Lebanon
Libya
Malaysia
Myanmar
Nepal
Nigeria
Qatar
Sri Lanka
Taiwan
Turkmenistan
UAE

Country status — per the HCCH status table as of 30.06.2026. Before filing we check the recipient country's status.

Step 3. How to read an apostille

Extracts from the Hong Kong form; seal, signature and dates hidden.

1


APOSTILLE
(Convention de La Haye du 5 octobre 1961)

Heading and convention. The form is the same in all convention countries — the recipient recognises it at once.

2


3. acting in the capacity of 其行事的身分為 | Registrar of Companies 公司註冊處處長

"Acting in the capacity of". Who signed the document: the Companies Registry, the IRD, a notary or a commissioner for oaths — this is the route.

3


9. Seal / stamp: 蓋章/蓋印 | 10. Signature: 簽署

Seal and signature. The recipient checks the apostille online by its number and date.

Electronic apostille (e-Apostille). Since 1 September 2025 — for now only for documents that a Hong Kong notary has certified and signed electronically. The recipient checks it online.

Need an apostille? We will find the route

Tell us which document and for which country — we will suggest the route and handle the certification and filing.

Message us on WhatsApp

Apostille page

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