



## WORKING IN THAILAND

### Foreign Employment

One may work in Thailand if he has a valid visa and a work permit and is able to perform work that does not violate the Alien Employment Act. Foreigners who intend to work in Thailand are subject to the Alien Employment Act B.E. 2521 (A.D. 1978). Under the provisions of the Act, a foreigner cannot perform any work or service unless a work permit has been issued by the Alien Employment Division of the Labor Department and Social Welfare Ministry, or unless the individual or the work performed falls within an exception to the Act.

The term “work” is defined very broadly, i.e. working by exerting one’s physical energy or employing one’s knowledge, whether or not for wages or other benefits. Theoretically, even volunteer or charity work requires a work permit. Although they receive no remuneration for the work performed, volunteer teachers have been required to obtain work permits. The following Schedule Annexed to the Royal Decree Stipulating Work in Occupations and Professions Prohibited to Aliens B.E. 2522 (A.D. 1979) closes 39 occupations to foreigners and reserves them for Thais:

- Labor work.
- Agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry or fishery, except work requiring specialized knowledge or farm supervision.
- Bricklaying, carpentry, or other construction work.
- Wood carving.
- Driving motor vehicles or vehicles which do not use machinery or mechanical devices, except piloting aircraft internationally.
- Front shop sale.
- Auction sale work.
- Supervising, auditing, or giving service in accountancy, except occasional internal auditing.
- Cutting or polishing precious or semi-precious stones.
- Haircutting, hairdressing, or beautification.
- Cloth weaving by hand.
- Mat weaving or making utensils from reed, rattan, jute, hay, or bamboo.
- Making rice paper by hand.
- Lacquer work.
- Making Thai musical instruments.
- Niello work.
- Goldsmith, silversmith, or gold-and-copper alloy smith work.
- Stone work.
- Making Thai dolls.
- Making mattresses or quilts.
- Making alms bowls.
- Making silk products by hand.
- Making Buddha images.
- Knife making.
- Making paper or cloth umbrellas.
- Making shoes.
- Making hats.
- Brokerage or agency except in international trading.



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- Professional civil engineering concerning design and calculation, systemization, analysis, planning, testing, construction supervision, or consulting services, excluding work requiring specialized techniques.
- Professional architectural work concerning design, drawing-making, cost estimation, or consulting services. Dressmaking.
- Pottery.
- Cigarette rolling by hand.
- Tour guiding or conducting.
- Hawking of goods.
- Thai typesetting by hand.
- Unwinding and twisting silk by hand.
- Clerical or secretarial work.

### **Immigration Requirements**

To work in or visit Thailand, immigration requirements must be met. Immigration into the Kingdom is governed by the Immigration Act B.E. 2522 (A.D. 1979) and is administered by the Immigration Bureau of the Royal Thai Police Department, Ministry of Interior. The major immigration requirements are that:

Any alien wishing to enter Thailand, unless otherwise exempted, must obtain a proper visa from a Royal Thai Embassy or Royal Thai Consulate prior to arrival in Thailand. Aliens in transit and tourists from countries who have agreements with Thailand to visit for not more than 30 days are not required to obtain visas before entering the Kingdom. However, these individuals must obtain an entry stamp at the airport, seaport, or land border checkpoint of entry.

### **Nationals of Countries Not Needing Visas to Visit Thailand for up to 30 Days**

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Western Samoa, Yemen.

For a stay longer than 30 days, all aliens must have a valid visa which can be obtained from a Royal Thai Embassy or Consulate prior to entry into Thailand. The exceptions are nationals of the Republic of Korea, Brazil, and Peru who are currently allowed to stay up to 90 days after obtaining an entry stamp at the Immigration checkpoint of entry.



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**Nationals of Countries Who May Apply for a 15-Day Visa upon Arrival at Don Muang (Bangkok) International Airport, Chiang Mai International Airport, Phuket International Airport, and Hat Yai International Airport:**

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, China (including Taiwan), Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte D'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Moldova, Monaco, Nauru, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovak Republic, Solomon Islands, Somalia, St. Christopher and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vatican City State, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

These lists of countries change periodically. The Immigration Bureau adds and removes countries as circumstances dictate. Aliens from all other countries who do not have agreements with Thailand must obtain visas before coming to Thailand.

In an intriguing development due to the revision of some immigration laws, Thailand has emerged as a prime spot for retirees from Japan. The immigration laws and other obstacles to foreign retirees moving to and living in Thailand have been removed. While subject to yearly extension, foreigners over age 50 who wish to retire to the Kingdom are now free to do so. The Thai retirement services industry is growing, thanks to these developments. Hospitals, healthcare, and resorts for the elderly in Thailand have been targeted by Japanese investors. The prolonged recession in Japan has prompted investors to move into the region, many eyeing small and middle-sized hotels in scenic locations.

## **VISAS**

### **Visa Definition**

A visa authorizes entry into Thailand for a specified length of time depending upon the type of visa. Your passport or travel document will show the expiry date of authorized entry. The permissible duration of stay is always entered in the passport. Always check the date of the entry/exit stamp in your passport. Visa Categories In Thailand there are numerous visa categories, with eight major types issued under the Immigration Act. Each category is restricted to the purpose for which the visa has been issued, and aliens are advised to strictly adhere to the rules governing each visa category.

- Transit Visa "TS", applicable to aliens entering Thailand with an intention to travel on to another country.
- Tourist Visa "TR", applicable to aliens visiting Thailand for sightseeing purposes only.



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Non-Immigrant Visa, applicable to aliens entering Thailand on a temporary basis for a particular purpose including:

- “B” for business purposes.
- “IM” for investment purposes, as approved by the appropriate ministries or departments concerned.
- “IB” for investment purposes or other affairs connected with an investment under the law governing investment promotion. This is a category of visa with issuance controlled by the Board of Investment.
- “ED” for purposes of study or observation.
- “M” for performance of duties connected with the mass media.
- “R” for missionary work with approval from the ministry or department concerned.
- “RS” for purposes of scientific research or teaching in a research or educational institution in Thailand with approval from the ministries or departments concerned.
- “EX” for performance of skilled or expert work.
- “O” for other purposes as prescribed in the ministerial regulations (as dependents, retired persons, sports trainers, or for family reunions, medical treatment, and legal proceedings).
- Diplomatic Visa “D”, applicable to aliens who enter the Kingdom on a diplomatic or consular mission or for the performance of duties with international organizations.
- Official Visa “F” for performance of official duties involving the Thai government.
- Immigrant Visa (Permanent Residence), applicable to those aliens entering Thailand for permanent residence purposes.
- Non-Quota Immigrant Visa, applicable to permanent residents wishing to leave Thailand and return within one year.
- Courtesy Visa, applicable to those diplomatic and/or official passport holders who enter the Kingdom for purposes other than official duties and to those ordinary passport holders who enter the Kingdom in response to an official Thai request.

### **Extension of Visas**

Each category of visa has restrictions for extension beyond the period originally allocated to it. Any extensions are determined by the Immigration Bureau. Diplomatic and Official visas are valid for the length of the mission. Tourist and Transit visas allocate 60 days and 30 days, respectively. Generally, tourist visas may be extended for a maximum of 7 to 30 days depending on applicant’s nationality. Transit visas may be extended for 7 to 10 days. Extension applications for tourist and transit visas are handled for a fee of Baht 1,900 at the Tourist and Transit Section, Sub-Division 3, Immigration Division. The following documents are needed to process an extension application:

- Passport or travel document.
- One photograph (2 ½ inches square).
- Statement of reasons for requesting an extension.