

Global Immigration alert

August 2025

Vietnam

Vietnam issues decree providing guidance for foreign workers

Executive summary

On 7 August 2025, the Vietnamese government implemented changes to the rules governing the issuance, renewal and revocation of work permits and work permit exemption certificates for foreign workers. The changes aim to streamline administrative procedures and enhance transparency.

Background

Decree No. 219/2025/ND-CP (Decree 219) replaces Decree 152/2020/ND-CP and Decree 70/2023/ND-CP. It applies to foreign workers under Article 157 of the Labor Code and those exempt under Clauses 1, 2 and 9 of Article 154.

Key developments

The following changes apply to all applications submitted on or after 7 August 2025:

- *Temporary suspension of applications*
 - All ongoing work permit applications (i.e., which have not yet been approved or denied) are temporarily suspended until further clarification is provided regarding the new procedures and requirements.
 - These applications may need to be resubmitted at a later date. This includes applications that were submitted by companies that received pre-approval to hire foreign workers. Individuals who have already received a work permit are not impacted by the suspension.
- *New authority for work permits*
 - The provincial People's Committees will now issue work permits, instead of the Department of Home Affairs. These committees may delegate responsibilities

to other agencies. Further details will be provided as they become available.

- *New timeline for work permit processing*
 - The new process is expected to shorten the overall timeline for obtaining or renewing work permits to approximately three weeks, down from five weeks previously. This timeframe includes the five-day recruitment announcement period (where applicable) and the application processing period of approximately 10 working days.
- *New requirements for employers*
 - Companies that employ foreign workers who will work in multiple locations in Vietnam using a work permit (or pursuant to a work permit exemption) are now required to notify the competent authorities in each province or centrally governed city where the foreign nationals will be assigned to work. The notification must be submitted at least three days prior to the planned work start date. Previously, separate work permits or work permit exemptions were required for each location of employment within Vietnam.
 - Employers are now required to select a job field from an official list that was published by the authorities (under Decision No. 27/2019/QĐ-TTg). Further details will be provided as they become available.
- *Revised criteria for experts, technical workers and executives*
 - Experts with a university degree or higher are now required to have at least two years of relevant work experience (down from three years previously).



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- Experts with a university degree or higher in the fields of finance, science or technology are now required to have at least one year of relevant work experience (down from three years previously).
- Technical workers who have completed at least one year of training (the training must be certified by an accredited training center and subject to authority assessment) are now required to have at least two years of relevant work experience, down from three years previously. Technical workers who do not meet this criterion require three years of relevant work experience, down from five years previously.
- Executives are now classified separately from managers and are required to have at least three years of relevant work experience. This is a new classification that did not exist in previous regulations.
- *Expanded work permit exemption eligibility*
 - Foreign workers entering Vietnam for less than 90 days cumulatively within a calendar year are now eligible for a work permit exemption, with no limitations on the number of entries.
 - Foreign workers recognized by competent authorities (e.g., ministries, ministerial-level agencies, provincial People's Committees) as operating in prioritized fields such as finance, science, technology, innovation and digital transformation, are now also eligible.
- *New documentation requirements*
 - All documents submitted in support of work permit applications and work permit exemption applications remain subject to consular legalization, translation into Vietnamese and notarization unless exempted by law.
 - Updated forms for submitting work permit applications and requesting work permit exemption confirmation letters are now available. However, the submission of these applications is currently suspended until further notice.
- *Additional process changes*
 - The process has been simplified by integrating the assessment of the need for employing foreign workers into the labor license issuance process, allowing employers to submit the application for a labor license along with the application for a criminal record certificate via the National Public Service Portal. Upon approval, the authorities will issue both the labor license and the criminal record certificate electronically to the employer.
 - Applicants must submit applications for work permits or work permit exemptions no earlier than 60 days and no later than 10 days prior to the expected start date of employment. Previously, applicants were required to submit work permit applications at least 15 days prior to the expected start date and work permit exemption applications at least 10 days prior to the expected start date, with no maximum advance submission limit.
- *Validity period of work permits and confirmation letters*
 - Work permits and confirmation letters remain valid for up to two years, based on the supporting documents (e.g., employment contract, business license). Employers may renew them once for up to two years.
- *Revocation of work permits and exemption certificates*
 - Authorities may revoke work permits and exemption certificates in cases such as expiry, non-compliance, criminal prosecution, or termination of employment or business operations.

Impact on employers

Employers may review and update their internal policies and processes to ensure compliance with the new rules and minimize business disruptions. Additionally, they may remain abreast of developments in case remedial action is required (e.g., refiling applications).

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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