

Global Immigration alert

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Thailand

Thailand revises its visa exemption and visa on arrival policies

Executive summary

On 19 May 2026, the Thai Cabinet approved, in principle, a comprehensive review of the country's visa exemption measures and entry privileges for foreign nationals to address the misuse of such privileges and strengthen national security controls. The Cabinet also approved, in principle, three draft notifications from the Ministry of Interior to revise the list of eligible countries and territories and modify the entry privileges of foreign nationals entering Thailand. The new regulations will take effect 15 days after their publication in the Royal Gazette.

Key developments

The following updates outline the Thai government's proposed revisions to visa exemption measures and entry privileges for foreign nationals:

- Adoption of a "one country, one privilege" approach to eliminate overlapping visa categories and reduce confusion.
- Revocation of the 60-day visa exemption policy that was previously granted to nationals of 93 countries and territories for tourism, short-term work or business visits.
- Reduction in the number of countries and jurisdictions whose nationals are eligible for a visa-exempt stay of up to 30 days for tourism purposes only to 54 countries. The revised list includes Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bhutan, Brunei, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Taiwan, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Applicable conditions for the 30-day visa exemption for tourism include:

- *Land border entries:* Permitted up to a maximum of two entries per calendar year (this restriction does not apply to passport holders from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore).
- *Extensions of stay:* Limited to a one-time extension of up to an additional 30 days.
- Introduction of a visa exemption scheme for tourism purposes for stays of up to 15 days for nationals of the Maldives, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Applicable conditions for the 15-day visa exemption for tourism only (excluding business visitor activities) include:

- *Land border entries:* Permitted up to a maximum of two entries per calendar year.
- *Extensions of stay:* Limited to a one-time extension of up to an additional 15 days.
- Reduction in the number of countries and territories eligible for a Visa on Arrival (VoA) at designated immigration checkpoints from 31 to four: Azerbaijan, Belarus, India and Serbia.

Once the new regulations take effect, individuals seeking entry to Thailand for business visits or short-term work will have only the following options:

- *For business visits:* Apply for and obtain the non-B visa prior to entry. Note: The non-B visa usually takes between two and three weeks to be approved.
- *For short-notice travel:* Foreign nationals from the 54 countries eligible for visa exemption for tourism purposes

may travel to Thailand and apply for an urgent work permit upon arrival.

Foreign nationals currently staying in Thailand under existing visa exemption policies or VoA schemes may remain in the country until their current authorized period of stay expires. The new rules will not apply retroactively to existing entry permissions.

Impact on employers

Employers should closely monitor these changes and ensure that their employees traveling to Thailand for business visits obtain the appropriate visa before departure from their home country.

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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