

Thai Authorities crack down on 'Visa Runs'

The Thai government has officially announced that it is cracking down further on expats who regularly extend their stay in the kingdom by going on *visa runs*.

So-called *visa runs* in some cases do not actually involve an application for a normal visa to work in Thailand at all. They are in fact a way for people holding a 60-day tourist visas and 30-day exemptions to live and work in Thailand.

Back in June, we reported that the Thailand's Immigration Bureau had instructed officials to only allow initial extensions of stay – in other words only up to three entries would be permitted on the same visa.¹

However, the Immigration Bureau has since made a more official move, informing foreign embassies and consulates in Thailand² that anyone allowed back into the country will have an *O-I* (Out-In) mark stamped in their passport.

According to the Immigration Bureau's website, leniency will be granted until 12th August, but only for those arriving in Thailand by air. From 13th August, if you have that the O-I stamp in your passport, you will not be allowed back into Thailand, unless you have a proper visa related to the purpose of your intended stay.

The penalties for over-staying are to become harsher too. Under the current system, they stand at a THB 500/day fine, up to a maximum of THB 20,000. From October the penalty will be anything from a one to ten-year ban from entering Thailand.³

These changes could severely affect some sectors, such as English teaching by native speakers. As some teachers do not intend to stay in Thailand for more than a year, employers find it inefficient to apply for work permits and accompanying visas. Now multiple visa extensions will no longer be permitted, meaning schools will have to find another way to ensure their teachers are staying legally in the country.⁴

¹ MBMG Update: *Thai Authorities crack down on 'Visa Runs'*, published 3rd June 2014

² <http://www.thaivisa.com/forum/topic/738876-confirmed-visa-run-crackdown-effective-from-august-12-2014-thai-foreign-ministry/>

³ <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/investigation/423791/coming-to-the-end-of-the-run>

⁴ *Ibid*

As obtaining a visa is a bureaucratic process, in which the relevant rules and regulations can sometimes be altered, it can be complicated and time-consuming if you do it yourself. If you need a visa – especially one to live in Thailand – and/or a work permit, it's more efficient to get a specialist to do all the work for you.

MBMG Corporate Solutions' legal department consists of a team of professionals with vast experience in handling these matters. They can guide you through the correct process every step of the way.

For more information, please contact us at the following address: info@mbmg-group.com or by calling us on +66 2 665 2536.

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