

Thailand Work Permit

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The Kingdom of Thailand – or simply Thailand, as it is more commonly known – is a lush and beautiful country. Its culture is rich, deeply ingrained, and extremely influential to Asian culture as a whole. Thailand is famed for amenable residents, high levels of literacy, verdant landscapes, and widely ranging opportunities. As such, many people from other countries seek to live and work in Thailand.

By and large, the Thai people embrace foreigners who choose to immigrate there, however the process to be awarded a Thai Work Permit are intensive and require a good deal of research.

Not so long ago, the Thai Government Board of Investment, or BOI, began embarking on something of an incentives program, wherein they are now encouraging business and companies to headquarter their offices in Thailand. As well, Thailand is now marketing itself as a retirement destination. Although the procedures one much go through to obtain a work permit in Thailand can seem a little overwhelming, it is arguably easier to get a work permit now, simply because there are more types of permits available now. While it is now far simpler to get a work permit there are several crucial procedures you must go through before receiving a permit is even a possibility.

Before a person from another country can even apply for a Thai work permit, he or she must first apply for and receive a non-immigrant visa. You can, however, apply for a non-immigrant visa either before you visit Thailand or after you are there. There are several ways to approach this and several kinds of visas for which you can apply.

Only after it is approved can you apply for a Thai work permit. After applying for it, the permit also has to be approved. This is generally the hardest part – the permit will only be approved if the job for which you are applying is not something that a Thai native could do, so you have to be very careful about describing your job title and function.

The amount of time it takes for a work permit to be approved varies quite a bit, and depends on everything from where you apply for it to what job you want to take. Sometimes it takes only three to five days, sometimes two weeks, and sometimes as much as a month or more. Therefore it is extremely important to make sure that your non-immigrant visa does not expire in the time it takes to have your permit approved. Initially, you can get a visa extension which lasts two weeks; after that, extension is for one week.

After your permit is approved, you still have to sign for it – at least in most cases. In order to do this, you have to go to the Labor Department, where you will receive a stamp on the back of your passport, as a means of receipt. It is likewise crucial not to let your work permit expire. It is far easier and less expensive to renew it on time than it is to let it expire. Furthermore, the permit is only valid while you work for the same company at the same location as noted on your job description. If you change jobs or locations, you must apply for a new permit – and often, the application requires a recommendation from your former employer in Thailand.

There are several binding requirements involved in these procedures as well. Requirements for a non-immigrant visa include a letter, written on the letterhead of the company for which you will be working; the letter must contain specific information, such as:

- • Proof that the foreigner filing the application has been offered a job;
- • Proof that the company or business has requested that the applicant file for a visa, with the intention of getting a work permit for the employee;
- • Proof that the company is vouching for the applicant's responsibility, dependability, good character, and respectful nature, especially as it pertains to rules, laws, and Thai customs.

Visas must be acquired through a Thai Embassy; in general, people apply to either the Consulate or the Consulates office, usually in one of Thailand's neighboring countries. They, too, may ask for a copy of the above document, as well as registrations. It is best to apply for a multiple-entry visa.

If at any point you have to extend your visa while you are in Thailand, there are a few requirements you must meet in order to do so. The Immigration Department will need the following information:

- Passport and copy of passport;
- Work permit and copy of work permit;
- Copy of company contract or letter written on company letterhead;
- Passport photo;
- Copies of appropriate forms (application for taxpayer ID; Palmador 1 forms);
- Bank book;
- Company staff member who is Thai;
- Application fee of 300- 2000 baht

The required paperwork needed to apply for a Thai work permit is similar. You are required to show several pictures, copies of identifying documents, copies of educational transcripts, proof of good health, money, and various tax documents.

There are both positive and negative aspects of living and working in Thailand. One of the positives are the many and varied kinds of jobs available for immigrants. Some of the most popular jobs include but are not limited to: teaching jobs; computer and IT jobs; literary jobs, namely involving writing and editing; engineering jobs; positions in the culinary field; working in the entertainment industry; specialists, such as doctors, lawyers, etc. There are many opportunities for self-employment and owning one's own business in Thailand as well. In addition, the cost of living in Thailand is very low, especially if you can secure a good job. The beautiful landscape and the relative ease of buying real estate are yet more benefits.

Because Thailand is newly industrialized, the economy is quite good, especially considering its troubled times in the recent past. Right now, the baht is stronger than it has been for some time.

However, the economy is one of the negatives to living in Thailand is well. Although it has recovered itself nicely, it tends to fluctuate quite a bit, and often with little forewarning. As well, the recent 9/11 attacks are still having an effect on the restrictions placed on foreigners seeking work permits and visas. Naturally, of course, the risk of natural disasters is a bit of a turn-off – there is always the fear that Thailand's recent devastation could occur again at any time.