

COVID-19 Flash Update: Government Guidance Affecting Migrant Workers and their Employers in Thailand and Neighbouring Countries

In this update, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides information for migrant workers and their employers on government decisions relevant to migrant workers in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Important Note: Please note that this is only a summary of the information provided by the above governments. Every effort is made to ensure information is up to date, however, as the situation is changing quickly you are encouraged to seek further information by contacting the Ministry of Labour or respective embassies directly.

Updates and Information from IOM

IOM Thailand conducted a rapid needs assessment to better understand the situation and vulnerabilities of migrants affected by the recent outbreak of COVID-19 in construction camps in Bangkok Metropolitan Area. [Assessment report](#) provides information on needs of migrants in construction camps. 77 per cent of the total population in the construction camps assessed are estimated to need urgent food assistance, 71 per cent need hygiene items, and 52 per cent need medical support.

IOM Thailand is monitoring border movements and providing assistance to migrants and the Royal Thai Government. For updates and to access IOM tools and guidelines related to COVID-19, please check here: <https://thailand.iom.int/iom-thailand-covid-19-response>

Thailand

Migrant workers allowed to extend their stay and work permits

Reference: [National News Bureau of Thailand](#), 15 July 2021

On 13 July, the Government approved a proposal to allow four groups of migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar to further extend their stay and work permits until 27 July 2022.

Previously, as per the Cabinet Resolution dated 5 August 2020 summarized in [Flash Update #17](#), the four groups allowed to extend their work and stay permits were as follows:

- Group 1 - workers who have completed four years of employment;
- Group 2 - workers who have changed or are changing employers;
- Group 3 - pink card holders;
- Group 4 - cross-border seasonal workers.

The Government is yet to announce details about the implementation of the order dated 13 July 2021, including the details of the groups that will qualify to apply for extension.

Construction sites and worker camps shut down to control the spread of COVID-19

Reference: [Public Relations Department](#), 27 June 2021, [Bangkok Post](#), 27 June 2021, [Bangkok Post](#), 28 June 2021

On 26 June 2021, the Government ordered the closure of construction sites and 575 construction worker camps in Bangkok, Nakhon Pathom, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Samut Prakarn, and Samut Sakorn from 28 June to 28 July

2021 to control the spread of COVID-19. Movement of workers in and out of construction camps was also restricted. The order followed the emergence of clusters in construction camps in Bangkok housing about 81,000 workers, most of whom are migrant workers.

The spokesperson of the Defence Ministry announced that affected workers insured in the Social Security Fund would receive 50 per cent of their wages, and all workers would be provided food and essential supplies. Mass testing would be conducted during the closure, and workers with confirmed COVID-19 would be isolated and treated according to approved protocols.

Migrant fishers in Phang Nga tested positive for COVID-19

Reference: [The Irrawaddy](#), 1 July 2021

On 1 July, more than 250 confirmed COVID-19 cases among Myanmar fishers have been recorded in Phang Nga province in southern Thailand.

Selected construction projects in Bangkok, Nakhon Pathom, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Samut Prakarn, and Samut Sakorn can resume work

Reference: [Prachachat](#) with CCSA Official Letter, 3 July 2021

On 3 July 2021, the Prime Minister as the Director of the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) announced that construction projects in Bangkok, Bangkok, Nakhon Pathom, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Samut Prakarn, and Samut Sakorn that meet the criteria outlined below could resume operations with permission from the Provincial Governor, the Office of Public Works, and the Provincial Communicable Diseases Committee.

The types of construction projects that can seek permission to resume are:

- Construction projects such as deep underground construction, basement construction that has not

been enclosed with mortar, or other constructions that may cause damage to the engineering structure or endanger people in the communities or surrounding areas if the work is stopped or delayed;

- Temporary construction projects such as scaffolding or those awaiting plastering, especially floor slabs;
- Construction related to traffic safety such as traffic lights, traffic lanes, and steel plates for road surfaces;
- Construction on sites related to COVID-19 control measures and for public health purposes (i.e., field hospitals, medical facilities, or other construction sites used for disease control purposes).

Granting of permits for construction projects that meet the above-mentioned criteria is on a case-by-case basis. Small construction projects such as house constructions may still be subject to temporary closure if deemed at risk of COVID-19 transmission by the Provincial Governor.

Though construction camps remain closed, construction workers may be granted approval by local authorities to travel within or between provinces for COVID-19 prevention and control purposes, including medical treatment, health check-up, vaccination, or other types of medical diagnoses and disease prevention.

Night curfew imposed on migrant workers in Mae Sot district, Tak province

Reference: [Bangkok Post](#), 9 July 2021, [The Irrawaddy](#), 1 July 2021

On 7 July 2021, the Provincial Communicable Disease Committee imposed a curfew from 08:00 PM to 04:00 AM on migrant workers in Mae Sot district, Tak province. Migrant workers who wish to travel during restricted hours need to secure a permit from the Mae Sot district chief in advance.

The order came following a surge in COVID-19 cases among migrant workers. On 1 July 2021, over 600 migrant workers were confirmed to have COVID-19.

Restrictions imposed to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 in Bangkok, Nakhon Pathom, Narathiwat, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Pattani, Samut Prakarn, Samut Sakhon, Songkla, and Yala

Reference: [Bangkok Post](#), 9 July 2021, [Bangkok Post](#), 10 July 2021

On 9 July 2021, the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) imposed new measures for COVID-19 prevention effective from 12 July to 25 July 2021. Bangkok, Nakhon Pathom, Narathiwat, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Pattani, Samut Prakarn, Samut Sakhon, Songkla, and Yala are classified as maximum and strict control zones (dark red), where further restrictions have been put in place as follows:

- The Government and private sector employees are encouraged to work from home as much as possible.
- Public transport stops operating from 09:00 PM to 03:00 AM.
- Convenience stores and fresh markets are allowed to open from 04:00 AM to 08:00 PM.
- Shopping centres and department stores must remain closed. However, supermarkets, restaurants, banks, pharmacies, mobile shops, and vaccine centres located inside shopping malls are allowed to open until 08:00 PM.
- Restaurants, including those located inside shopping malls, are allowed to open for takeaway until 08:00 PM. Dine-ins are prohibited.
- Beauty clinics, massage parlours, and spas are not allowed to operate.

- Social gatherings of more than five people are prohibited, except government offices and for religious events.
- A night curfew is imposed from 09:00 PM to 04:00 AM. People seeking medical treatment, medical personnel, and utility workers on duty are exempted from the curfew order with permission granted by local authorities.
- Interprovincial travels are discouraged. Travel and quarantine rules and regulations are subject to provincial orders.

Funeral support increased for families of workers who died from work-related illnesses and/or accidents

Reference: [The Royal Thai Government Gazette](#), Book no. 138, edition 45 Gor, 18 July 2021

Funeral support under the Compensation Act B.E. 2537 has been increased from THB 40,000 to THB 50,000. The next-of-kin of workers, including migrant workers, will receive compensation from employers in cases of death caused by work-related accidents and/or illnesses.

Note: There is no clarification on whether workers infected with COVID-19 at the workplace are eligible for compensation.

The Embassy of the Kingdom of Cambodia in Thailand provides support to construction workers

Reference: [The Labour Attaché's Office's Official Facebook Page](#), 5 July 2021

On 5 July 2021, the Cambodian Embassy in Thailand distributed food items to Cambodian workers in Bangkok affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Items were distributed at Wat Makkasan in Bangkok to 46 families of construction workers in accordance with the preventive measures of the Thai Ministry of Public Health and with the cooperation of the Thai authorities.

IOM COVID-19 Response

From 1 June to 15 July 2021, IOM Thailand facilitated 690 migrant workers' access to up-to-date online information about COVID-19 prevention and control and living and working in Thailand through the information hub [MitrThai](#). Migrant workers also had access to skills training modules on labour rights and responsibilities and COVID-19 prevention courses on the MOVE app that is also accessible via [MitrThai](#).

Distribution of goods to Cambodian families in Chachoengsao Province

Reference: [The Labour Attaché's Office's Official Facebook Page](#), 6 July 2021

On 6 July 2021, the Labour Attaché of the Royal Embassy of Cambodia, in collaboration with the Labour Protection Network (LPN) Foundation, distributed food supplies and face masks to 70 families of Cambodians working in furniture processing companies in Chachoengsao Province in Thailand who are suffering from the third wave of the COVID-19 outbreak in Thailand.

Myanmar

IOM COVID-19 Response

IOM Myanmar continued to provide humanitarian support for vulnerable returnees from Thailand and internal migrants in distressed conditions, reaching a total of 385 (237 men, 148 women) migrants during the period from 16 June to 14 July 2021. IOM supported the costs of onward transportation and meals and provided clothing and medical support in close collaboration with the Kayin State and Tanintharyi Region authorities.

Suspension of International Flights extended until 31 June 2021

Reference: [Yangon International Airport's Official Website](#), 30 May 2021

According to the notice from the Department of Civil Aviation issued on 30 May 2021, the ban on all international commercial flights to and from Yangon International Airport has been further extended until 31 July 2021.

Stay-at-home order imposed in Myanmar

Reference: [Ministry of Health and Sports' Official Facebook Page](#), 12 July 2021

The Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHS) imposed a stay-at-home order in 74 townships in Myanmar until further notice. The townships are listed on the [MOHS' Facebook page](#).

Order details and related instructions remain unchanged as summarized in [IOM's Flash Update #20](#).



IOM Myanmar providing Safe Migration Orientation and promoting Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) Services at Kyauk Lone Gyi Facility

Cambodia

COVID-19 Situation in Cambodia

As of 13 July 2021, Cambodia has reported 63,615 confirmed COVID-19 cases in total, with 986 death reported. The Ministry of Health encourages people to continue complying with COVID-19 prevention measures. For the latest on the COVID-19 situation in Cambodia, please visit: <http://www.cdcmoh.gov.kh/>

Ministry of Health issued guidance on strengthening preventive measures

Reference: Ministry of Health, No. 3.16. AD, 25 June 2021

On 25 June 2021, the Ministry of Health released a letter informing Governors of the Municipal-Provincial Board of Governors and Chairs of Municipal-Provincial Committees to strengthen the implementation of COVID-19 preventive measures. The cases in the recent outbreak in Cambodia were identified as the COVID-19 delta variant. To prevent its spread in communities, the Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat COVID-19 advises authorities as follows:

- Ensure all passengers entering Cambodia undergo the mandatory 14-day quarantine at quarantine centres. Quarantine at their villages or communes is not allowed. Municipal-Provincial COVID-19 Committees must cooperate with Sub-Committees in managing border checkpoints and identifying the nearest quarantine centres for passengers. All authorities must pay more attention to strengthening quarantine measures at all centres per health guidelines.
- Strengthen the management of borders to avoid unregulated crossing into Cambodia. The Municipal-Provincial COVID-19 Committees must strengthen the management of migrants returning to their villages and communes and strictly implement quarantine measures if they

did not go through the quarantine procedure at the borders.

- Strengthen the implementation of both administrative and health measures to prevent, control, and cut off the transmission of the new variant of COVID-19 at the local level where infections have been found.

Prime Minister Hun Sen delivers a special message in a public Zoom meeting with Government officials

Reference: [Prime Minister Hun Sen's Official Facebook Page](#), 1 July 2021

Prime Minister Hun Sen ordered the preparation of more hospitals and healthcare centres in the districts as well as nationwide rapid tests, especially along the borders. He announced that 10,000 rapid test kits will be sent to each province. "We need to restrict border crossings both by land, water, and air, and all border checkpoints must have rapid test kits," he said.

The Prime Minister also informed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working with their Thai counterparts to ensure that Cambodian workers in Thailand maintain their regular status. Workers in Thailand are encouraged to avoid returning to Cambodia to reduce the risks of contracting or spreading the virus.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Updated measures to prevent, control, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic

Reference: The Prime Minister Office, Order No. 745/PMO, 04 July 2021

While COVID-19 cases are decreasing, the country remains at risk as the Lao People's Democratic Republic's neighbouring countries face new waves and outbreaks, leading to an increased number of returning migrant workers. With some recently imported cases identified as the COVID-19 delta variant, the Government has decided that it is necessary to extend lockdown restrictions for

another 15 days from 05 July to 19 July 2021. Details are provided on the [Centre of Information and Education for Health Official Facebook Page](#).

Details on the key measures are summarized in [IOM's Flash Update #31](#). In addition to these measures, the following has been included since 4 July 2021:

- All types of sports which require close contact, such as soccer/football and boxing, are prohibited in Vientiane Capital and in provinces where cases of community transmission persist.
- Indoor sports complex in provinces that have no cases of community transmission are allowed to operate. In Vientiane Capital and provinces with community transmission, the owners of sport complex must request permission to operate from the Central Task Force Committee through the Education and Sports sector.
- Gatherings and meetings in venues located outside red zones are allowed with strict preventive measures.
- Fishing boats and vessels are allowed to operate on the rivers along the border between Lao People's Democratic Republic and neighbouring countries from 06:00 AM to 06:00 PM (previously 08:00 AM to 06:00 PM). Local authorities and security forces continue to limit the number of boats and vessels that can operate and record the time of departure and return of each boat and vessel.
- Commuting is allowed in areas with no community transmission.

- Non-Lao nationals entering Lao People's Democratic Republic who wish to travel to other provinces must show their travel documents, certificate of 14-day quarantine, and permission letter issued by the Central Task Force Committee to relevant authorities to be exempt from mandatory quarantine at the destination province.
- Non-Lao nationals who are currently working or living in Lao People's Democratic Republic are expected to abide by the same preventive measures as Lao citizens.
- All educational institutions in provinces with no community transmission cases are allowed to resume operations with permission from the Provincial Task Force Committee.
- The final year class of vocational schools, physical-cultural education, and higher-level education in Vientiane Capital are allowed to resume operations in compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures.



IOM Lao People's Democratic Republic providing Safe Migration Orientation to migrants, Vientiane Capital, 27 June 2021

This COVID-19 Flash Update: Government Guidance Affecting Migrant Workers and their Employers in Thailand and Neighbouring Countries, has been produced by IOM Thailand. For more information, please contact ThailandLHD@iom.int

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