

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

The COVID-19 situation is evolving rapidly. 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.

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 launched Thailand's first online migrant worker information hub MitrThai.com to facilitate access of migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar to up-to-date information and referral services on migrating, working and living in Thailand. *MitrThai.com* is currently available in Khmer, Laotian, Myanmar and Thai languages.

IOM Lao People's Democratic Republic published [Returning Migrants Survey # 1](#). The report is the first in a series highlighting the extent of COVID-19's effects on returning migrants from Thailand, in terms of their socio-economic vulnerabilities and challenges.

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

State of Emergency extended from 1 to 31 October 2020

Reference: [Royal Gazette no. 137](#), special edition no. 227 Ngor, 7 October 2020

On 28 September 2020, the Thailand Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) and the Cabinet approved the extension of the State of Emergency Order to 31 October 2020. This extension, the fifth since March 2020, allows the Royal Thai Government to continue implementing COVID-19 preventive measures in the country.

Thai Immigration Bureau extends the grace period for visa extensions

Reference: [Royal Gazette no. 137](#), special edition no. 229 Ngor, 30 September 2020

The Royal Thai Government earlier announced permission for non-Thai nationals to apply to extend their visa before a 26 September 2020 deadline. Details of this announcement were provided in [IOM's Flash Update #16](#).

Due to the high number of visa extension requests and COVID-19 related limitations that affect the processing of requests, **the Royal Thai Government has extended this deadline to 31 October 2020.**

This extension applies to all visa types. The visa extension request will be reviewed and decided by the Thai Immigration Bureau on a case-by-case basis. All visa extensions will be effective from 1 November 2020, with a varying validity period for each visa type.

Myanmar

Stay at home order in Yangon

Reference: Ministry of Health and Sports, Order no. 113/2020, 5 October 2020

The Ministry of Health and Sports' Order no. 107/2020 imposed a stay-at-home order in all townships in Yangon, except Ko Ko Kyun township, effective from 08:00 AM on 21 September 2020 until further notice. Order details and related instructions remain unchanged as summarized in [IOM's Flash Update #20](#).

Order no 113/2020 extends the closure of handicraft manufacturers until 21 October 2020.

Stay at home order in Mon State, Mandalay, Bago, and Ayeyarwaddy Regions

Reference: Ministry of Health and Sports, Order no. 110/2020, 25 September 2020

The Myanmar Ministry of Health and Sports imposed a stay-at-home order in the following townships effective from 08:00 AM on 26 September 2020 until further notice:

- Mon State (Mawlamyine and Bilin Townships)
- Mandalay Region (Maharaungmyae, Chanayetharzan and Amarapura Townships)
- Bago Region (Ka Wa, Bago and Thanapin Townships)
- Ayeyarwaddy Region (Patheingyi, Pyawbwe and Maubin Townships)

Stay at Home Order no. 110/2020 contains similar instructions to those stipulated by Order no. 107/2020, dated 20 September 2020, which are summarized in [IOM's Flash Update #20](#). In addition to these instructions, handicraft manufacturers must close from 26 September 2020. Re-opening of handicraft manufacturers must be reviewed and decided by relevant state and regional level governments in coordination with the Department of Labour and Department of Health.

Residents who fail to comply with the Orders are liable for penalties in accordance with [the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law, the 8th Waning of Pyatho, 1372 M.E.](#)

Update on safe return arrangements for Myanmar migrants in Thailand

Reference: General Administrative Department, Myawaddy and Department of Labour, Tanintharyi region and Shan state

Between 22 March and 6 October 2020, 120,584 Myanmar nationals were safely repatriated from Thailand through safe return arrangements. For more details on these arrangements, see page 2 in [IOM's Flash Update #10](#).

Cambodia

COVID-19 updates in Cambodia

As of 6 October 2020, Cambodia has reported 280 confirmed COVID-19 cases in total, with no deaths reported. The Ministry of Health encourages people to continue adhering with COVID-19 prevention measures. For the latest on the COVID-19 situation in Cambodia, please visit: <http://www.cdcmoh.gov.kh/>

Cambodian Ambassador meets the Thai Minister of Labour to discuss the situation of Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand

Reference: The Labour Attaché's Office's [official Facebook page](#), 2 October 2020

H.E. Ouk Sorphoan, Ambassador of Cambodia in Thailand met with H.E. Sochhat Chhumklin, Minister of Labour of Thailand, along with representatives of relevant ministries, provincial and district authorities in Thailand on 2 October 2020.

During the meeting, the representatives discussed the situation of Cambodian migrant workers. The Ambassador raised the following four points in relation to migrant workers' stay and work in Thailand:

1. For Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand who are under the MOU system but who have not yet processed their documents due to COVID-19, the Ambassador requested that the Royal Thai Government facilitate temporary work and stay permits, until the Ministry of Labour resumes processing documents for MOU migrant workers.
2. The Ambassador requested that the cost of residence visas for Cambodian migrant workers be reduced from 1,900 baht per year to 500 baht for two years.
3. The Ambassador requested that the cost of 14-days quarantine be reduced, in order to facilitate entry for migrant workers to Thailand through the MOU system.
4. The Ambassador requested that the Royal Thai Government ensure that employers cover the cost of 14-days quarantine, in order to facilitate migration of Cambodian migrant workers to Chanthaburi to harvest longan fruit. The first phase is expected to bring 1,000 migrant workers from Cambodia, using border passes.

While noting that they would consider these points and inform the Embassy accordingly, the Royal Thai Government representatives asked the Cambodian

counterparts to expedite deployment of 1,000 migrant workers, who hold border passes, through Ban Laem, Chanthaburi and Doung check points in Battambang province of Cambodia.

The Cambodian Labour Attaché produces an educational video on "Regular Migrant Workers" in Thailand

Reference: The Labour Attaché's Office's [official Facebook page](#), 29 September 2020

The Cambodian Labour Attaché published [an educational video for Cambodian migrant workers about regular labour migration pathways to Thailand](#). The Labour Attaché emphasized that migrant workers must know migration regulations to avoid facing problems stemming from irregular migration.



Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) Poipet, supported by IOM Cambodia, providing 43 migrant workers with information on safe migration and employment options through Job Centers in Cambodia, 4 October 2020. These migrant workers were received by the MRC after being sent back to Cambodia by Thai Immigration Police at the Poipet International border check point after attempting to enter Thailand irregularly.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Further easing of restrictions from 1 to 31 October 2020

Reference: The Prime Minister Office, N.1049/PMO, 30 September 2020

The Prime Minister officially announced further easing of restrictions during the period from 1 to 31 October 2020. Details are provided on [Lao COVID-19 Taskforce Official Website](#).

Key measures are listed below, with all measures subject to compliance with physical distancing and COVID-19 prevention measures:

- Entertainment venues, such as karaoke clubs and game centres, remain closed.
- Local and traditional Points of Entry (POEs)¹ remain closed, except for some POEs which are allowed for goods transportation with the Government's permission.
- International POEs are open only for movement of individuals with emergency needs as identified by the Lao COVID-19 Taskforce. Transportation of goods through international POEs is allowed.
- The issuance of entry visas remains suspended for individuals travelling from or transiting through countries affected by COVID-19.
- International charter flights from countries with no reported COVID-19 cases are allowed.

- Group tours are allowed only for tourists from countries with no reported COVID-19 cases.
- Any individual can take a COVID-19 test on a fee basis. The COVID-19 Taskforce will determine the fee in coordination with relevant agencies.
- Individuals arriving in Lao People's Democratic Republic must be tested for COVID-19 upon arrival and stay at a Government quarantine facility for 48 hours until test results are received. If tested negative, they must continue to self-quarantine, and can choose to do so at home.



IOM Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Department of Immigration conducting a rapid assessment at Boten Point of Entry in Luangnamtha Province, observing the operational procedures and processes in border management amid COVID-19, 23 September 2020

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

Important disclaimer: The information presented in this document does not necessarily reflect the views of IOM. The inclusion or presentation of material does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM or of any of its members or partners.

¹ Local POE is for Lao nationals crossing the border using day passes.

Traditional POE is for residents of the area surrounding the border crossing. Residents do not have to present any paperwork to cross the border using traditional POE.