

## 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 Thailand, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

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 Thailand

IOM Thailand's **COVID-19 Appeal** is [now available](#).

IOM's [COVID-19: Guidance to enhance migrant worker protection during the current health crisis](#) is now available for download in multiple languages:

- For Employers and Business: [Thai](#)
- For Labour Recruiters: [Thai](#) | [Khmer](#)

**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

**Top three at-risk migrant workers, provinces and industries categorized**

Reference: interview with the Department of Employment in the [Komchadluek Newspaper](#)

The Department of Employment has categorized 181,263 migrant workers who remain in Thailand as being at high risk of COVID-19 infection. The top three provinces where these migrant workers are located are: Samut Prakarn,

Chiang Mai, and Chonburi; while the top three industries in which they are employed are: construction, agricultural processing, and hospitality and services.

**Work-related protests are forbidden by the Royal Thai Gazette**

Reference: [Thai Royal Gazette no.137, special no. 110](#)

Effective from 6 May and for the duration of the Emergency Decree (until 31 May at the time of writing), the Royal Thai Gazette announced a regulation forbidding employers and both Thai and non-Thai workers from participating in protests and strikes across the country. Employers and workers involved in any ongoing protests or strikes prior to this announcement must resume work immediately. Non-compliance will result in a fine of up to THB 40,000 and/or imprisonment for up to two years.

**Thailand announces roadmap to assess conditions for relief measures, including reopening businesses**

Reference: [Thailand's Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration official Facebook page](#)

To better understand on-the-ground perspectives regarding businesses reopening and other potential measures to ease restrictions, Thailand's Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) announced a

roadmap to assess the current situation and to develop further relief measures.

The Royal Thai Government began to ease restrictions for [certain businesses](#) from 3 May. The Government plans to assess the situation every 14-days starting from 3 May. The first relief phase is from 3 to 17 May, while the second relief phase is from 18 May to 1 June.

To manage the transition from the first relief phase to the second, the Government will collect feedback from various sectors and individuals through official visits, closed business meetings, and through an [online survey](#). These efforts are led by the Thailand National Statistics Office (NSO), Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) Foundation, International Health Policy Program (IHPP) and the United Nations (UN). According to the roadmap:

- 8 - 12 May: NSO leads data collection supported by TDRI, IHPP and the UN;
- 13 May: NSO and TDRI evaluate and analyze impacts from the first relief phase (3 - 17 May) based on results from consultations and survey;
- 14 - 15 May: CCSA drafts a policy on further relief measures based on information collected and analyzed;
- 16 May: CCSA committee evaluates the draft policy on relief measures;
- 17 May: provided the draft policy is approved, the CCSA announces details of a second relief phase including detailed measures on 17 May.



### Updated travel restrictions to and from Ranong Province

Reference: <https://covid.ranongcities.com>

On 7 May, the Ranong Provincial Government updated travel restrictions, effective from 8 to 31 May.

Thai nationals who are registered Ranong residents returning to the province are required to undertake 14-days mandatory home quarantine, closely monitored by local health authorities.

All non-Ranong residents travelling to the province are required to present test results showing the individual has tested negative to COVID-19 within 3 days prior to arrival. They must also present the following information to the Provincial Disease Control unit upon arrival at the provincial border checkpoints:

- dates of arrival and departure from the province;
- purpose of travel;
- residential address.

Once granted permission to enter, non-residents of Ranong province are required to undertake 14-days mandatory home quarantine, closely monitored by local health authorities.

Special cases and frequent travelers such as medical visits, official visits, and work related to the operations of banks, can submit a request for an exemption to the above requirements to the Chiefs of District. Full list of eligible activities and requirements for transit through the province can be found [HERE](#).

### Travel restrictions in Trat Province (bordering with Cambodia)

Reference: <http://www.trat.go.th>

The Trat Governor announced the suspension of all personal travel to and from the province from 8 May until further notice. Exemptions are granted for cargo transportation only, with no more than two staff per vehicle and subject to temperature checks by the Provincial Disease Control Office upon entering the province.

## Myanmar

### Second repatriation flight for Myanmar nationals in Thailand

Reference: Myanmar Labour Attaché Office – Thailand, [official Facebook page](#)

On 12 May, a second repatriation flight operated by Myanmar Airways International (MAI) repatriated 67 Myanmar nationals from Thailand.

Detailed instruction on repatriation flights for Myanmar nationals in Thailand are summarized on page 4 of [IOM's Flash Update #7](#).

### Masks mandatory in public spaces in Yangon, subject to fines

Reference: NLD Central Information Committee, 11 May 2020

From 13 May onwards, people from 44 townships in Yangon must wear masks outside their houses, according to the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases

Law. Non-compliance with the above order will result in a fine of MMK 5,000. Gathering in groups of more than five people without the prior consent of the respective ward administration is also prohibited.



IOM Myanmar providing WASH consumable kits and items for individual use in a quarantine facility in Myawaddy, 28 April 2020

## Cambodia

### Emerging reports of unethical recruitment practices in Cambodia

Since the COVID-19 situation has started to ease in Thailand, and the land Points of Entry (PoEs) remain closed between Thailand and all neighbouring countries, a recent increase in unethical recruitment practices has been reported. On 10 May, [68 Cambodian nationals including children](#) were found by Thai soldiers along the border between Sa Kaeo province in Thailand and Banteay Meanchey province in Cambodia. They were deceived into paying THB 2,500 per person to a broker and have safely returned to Cambodia.

### Measures to prevent irregular border crossings from Cambodia to neighbouring counties

Reference: Ministry of Interior, No. 1376 SCJN, 13 May

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) issued a letter to all provincial governors and chairs of provincial committees

to strengthen border management through the following key measures:

- Monitor irregular crossings;
- Detect brokers and unethical activities;
- Coordinate with authorities of neighboring countries for repatriation;
- Continue raising awareness at community level.



IOM Cambodia assisting the Provincial Health Department during health check-ups for Cambodian returnees at Poipet Transit Centre, 13 May 2020

## Lao People's Democratic Republic

### Government plan to support Lao workers affected by COVID-19

Reference: N.1235/MoLSW, 8 May 2020

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) announced a plan to assist both returning Lao migrants and unemployed Lao workers in the country. The Skills Development and Employment Department (SDED) is leading on these plans. Key points are:

- Labour and Social Welfare officials at provincial, district and village levels will collect information, such as employment background and migration channels, on all Lao workers who are unemployed due to COVID-19;
- Results will be submitted to SDED in Vientiane Capital by 20 May 2020, for internal analysis;
- MoLSW plans to raise awareness on regular migration channels at the community level;
- Returnee migrants and unemployed workers are encouraged to register online at <http://www.lmi.gov.la/COVID19/> to receive further support from the Ministry.

### Hotlines for psychosocial support now available

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in cooperation with Lao Women's Union (LWU), Vientiane Youth Centres (VYC) and Lao Youth Union (LYU) recently launched hotline numbers offering psychosocial support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Twelve counsellors from LWU will focus on the needs of women and girls; three counsellors from LYU will focus on young people; and six counsellors from VYC will focus on sexual and reproductive health.

- **1362:** For women on domestic violence
- **1361:** For women on mental health, and sexual and reproductive health
- **137:** For men on sexual and reproductive health
- **9772 1042, 5577 4428, 2399 9629, and 7788 0044:** For young people.

*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](mailto:ThailandLHD@iom.int)*

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