

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 Machachai sub-district of Mueang Samut Sakhon district, Samut Sakhon. Assessment reports ([Round 1](#), [Round 2](#), [Round 3](#)) provide information on the food, hygiene and medical assistance needs of migrants in Mahachai.

IOM Thailand published an Information Sheet on **Tips for Employers of Migrant Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic** (available in [English](#) and [Thai](#)) and a Flyer "**Say NO to Discrimination, Stigma and Hate Speech targeting Migrant Workers**" (available in [English](#), [Khmer](#), [Laotian](#), [Myanmar](#) and [Thai](#) languages).

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

Open registration for irregular migrant workers residing in Thailand

Reference: [Department of Employment Official Website](#), 06 January 2021

Irregular migrants residing in Thailand, regardless of their employment status, can register online with the

Department of Employment (DOE) to regularize their stay. Migrant workers are not required to have a valid personal identity document issued by a relevant authority of their country of origin to complete the registration. The **registration is open from 15 January to 13 February 2021** at <https://e-workpermit.doe.go.th/>. Migrant workers will be able to obtain stay (pink card) and work permit.

Once registered, migrant workers must undergo a **medical examination and COVID-19 test by 16 April 2021**. Those currently unemployed can still register in the DOE system. They must, however, find an employer by 13 September 2021. The **deadline for completing the whole registration process** resulting in the receipt of a stay permit (pink card) is **12 November 2021**. The cost for completing the process is THB 9,380 for fishery workers and THB 9,180 for workers employed in other sectors.

A total of 43,384 migrant workers registered as of 17 January 2021, including 13,068 workers from Cambodia, 5,093 workers from Lao People's Democratic Republic, and 25,223 workers from Myanmar.

New Ministerial Regulation on unemployment compensation for insured persons under the Social Security Fund due to force majeure

Reference: [Royal Thai Government Gazette](#), 30 December 2020

As of 19 December 2020, all workers, including migrants, who are insured under the Social Security Fund (SSF) and whose job is affected by COVID-19 restrictions is eligible to apply for SSF unemployment-related compensation,

equivalent to 50 per cent of their salary for up to 90 days. To be eligible, workers must be impacted by the quarantine requirements, or temporary or permanent COVID-19-related closures of their employers' businesses. Eligible workers can apply at Social Security Offices or online at www.sso.go.th.

COVID-19 prevention and control measures announced

Reference: [Royal Gazette No. 138, Special Edition 4 Ngong](#), 6 January 2021

The Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situation No.17 was enacted on 7 January 2021 until further notice. The Decree enforces strict prevention and control measures, including the following provisions:

- Government will enhance the enforcement of preventive measures to ensure that everyone, including migrants, strictly adheres to COVID-19 preventive measures through social distancing, wearing masks, washing hands, regularly measuring body temperatures, complying with quarantine measures, and using "Mor Chana" and "Thai Chana" mobile contact tracing applications.
- Government will enhance the enforcement of extremely strict measures in the maximum control areas. Details on measures to control travel in and out of maximum control areas are provided in the section on *Travel restrictions at provincial level, including specific restrictions on the movement of migrant workers* of this Flash Update.
- Failure to comply is subject to imprisonment for up to two years or a fine of up to THB 40,000, or both.

Note: Provincial Governors are allowed to issue orders with different penalties, but this must be within the maximum penalty identified in the Royal Gazette No.138.

Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration announces zoning of provinces for COVID-19 disease control

Reference: [Thailand's Department of Disease Control Official Website](#), 13 January 2021

As of 11 January 2021, there were [58 provinces](#) with confirmed COVID-19 cases implementing measures

issued by the relevant Provincial Governor's Offices in line with the Royal Thai Government zone-specific instructions. The following risk zones are currently in place:

- Maximum control (dark red) zone provinces: Chanthaburi, Chonburi, Rayong, Samut Sakhon, and Trat.
- High risk (red) zone provinces: Nonthaburi, Phatumthani, Ayuthaya, Saraburi, Lopburim Angthong, Nakornnayok, Kanchanaburi, Nakornpathom, Rachaburi, Suphanburi, Prachubkirikan, Petchaburim Samutsongkarm, Chachoengsao, Prachinburi, Sa Kaeo, Samutprakarn, Chumphon, Ranong, and Bangkok.
- Mild Risk (orange) zone provinces: Kampangetch, Chainat, Chaiyaphum, Nakhon Sawan, Nakhon Ratchasima, Buriram, Phang Nga, Phetchabun, Sukhothai, Surat Thani, and Uthaitani.
- High Monitoring (yellow) zone provinces with very low numbers of cases of COVID-19.
- Green zone provinces where there is no reported case of COVID-19.

Travel restrictions at provincial level, including specific restrictions on the movement of migrant workers

Reference: [Office of the Permanent Secretary for Interior Official Website](#), 9 January 2021

Measures to control travel in and out of maximum control/dark red zones (Chanthaburi, Chonburi, Rayong, Samut Sakhon, and Trat) are implemented to prevent spreading of COVID-19. While Thai nationals of these provinces are required to obtain clearance from Provincial Governor's Offices before departing from or arriving in these provinces according to the criteria set by the COVID-19 Situation Management Center, movement of migrant workers in and out of these provinces is not permitted.

As of 21 January, in addition to these five provinces, the movement of migrant workers into and out of Uthai Thani, Phetchaburi, Phrae, Amnart Charoen, Bangkok is also not permitted.

Social Security Insurance covers COVID-19 tests for insured individuals

Reference: [Royal Gazette No. 138 Special Edition 8 Ngong](#), 11 January 2021.

The Social Security Fund (SSF) will cover COVID-19 testing for insured individuals who meet the below criteria, effective from 11 January 2021. These criteria include:

- Body temperature higher than 37.5 Celsius.
- Symptoms of coughing, sore throat, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, and/or difficulty breathing.
- History of travel or stay in the COVID-19 maximum and strict control provinces within one month before symptoms appeared, or contact with positive COVID-19 cases within one month before symptoms appeared.
- Not receiving other financial support from the Royal Thai Government for the COVID-19 test.
- Doctor's referral to undergo the COVID-19 test.

If the insured individuals meet all the conditions listed above, then the SSF insurance will cover:

- COVID-19 test at the actual rate;
- Other service fees related to the COVID-19 test will be paid at a lump sum rate of maximum THB 600 per time.

Note: At the time of writing, there are no details of whether the SSF insurance will cover costs for COVID-19 testing in public and/or private hospitals and limits on how many times insured individuals be tested.

Myanmar

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 2020 and 11 January 2021, 191,578 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](#)

Extension of stay-at-home orders

Reference: [Ministry of Health and Sports Official Website](#)

Ministry of Health and Sports extended stay-at-home orders for following townships effective from 27 December 2020:

- Yangon Region: all townships except Cocoyung Township and selected wards/village-tracts in Kwangyangon, Seikkyi/Khanaungto, and Twantay Townships
- Ayeyarwady Region: Patheingyi Township only
- Bago Region: Bago Township only
- Rakhine State: all townships
- Kachin State: selected wards/village-tracts in Hpakan Township
- Mandalay Region: Aungmyethazan, Chanmyathazi, Pyigyidagon and Patheingyi townships.

Details of stay-at-home orders are similar to those of previous orders described in [IOM's Flash Update # 20](#).



IOM Myanmar commemorating International Migrants Day 2020 with returned migrants at Shwe Myawaddy Facility Quarantine Centre at Myawaddy, Kayin State, 18 December 2020.

IOM COVID-19 response

IOM Myanmar continued to provide humanitarian support for vulnerable returnees from Thailand in distressed conditions, reaching a total of 3,480 migrants during the period from 16 December 2020 to 20 January

2021. IOM supported the costs of onward transportation and meals and provided clothing and medical support, in close collaboration with Kayin State, Rakhine State and Ayeyarwaddy, Yangon Region authorities.

Cambodia

Information for Cambodian migrant workers on measures related to their stay and work in Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic

Reference: Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT), [Letter No. 045/20 KB/SChNKHL](#), 21 December 2020; Royal Embassy of Cambodia, [Letter No. 983/20/SKB4](#), 22 December 2020

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT) issued an announcement addressing 1) migrant workers currently staying and working in Thailand, and 2) Cambodian nationals aspiring to find employment in Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic, on 21 December 2020. Key points of the announcement include:

- Cambodian migrant workers currently in Thailand should:
 - Follow the recommendations of the Royal Government of Cambodia on protecting health and safety of migrant workers, and trust the Thai authority's measures on managing the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Avoid travel to other provinces or change workplaces and respect and follow all regulations and measures introduced by the Thai authorities.
 - Follow announcements of the Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Bangkok and contact the Embassy or Consulate in case of any issues by phone at 092 8050 561 (Consular Section), 094 0925 905 (Sub-Division of Labor). They can also contact the COVID-19 Hotline of the Department of Disease Control of Thailand by dialing 1422 and extension 81 for Khmer language.
 - The MoLVT has been in contact with the Ministry of Labour of Thailand to request the processing of relevant documents for Cambodian migrant workers staying and working in Thailand.

- For Cambodian workers currently in Thailand who need to return to Cambodia, workers must:
 - Travel through Osmach, Doung or Poipet checkpoints where the Cambodian Government has organized health screening sites. These border crossings host Government facilities where returning workers must undergo 14-days quarantine. The quarantine centers will arrange transportation for migrant workers to return to their hometown after completing quarantine. If faced with any livelihood related issues, returnee migrants can reach out to the village and commune authorities to receive support services.
 - Returning migrant workers can register with the National Employment Agency on www.nea.gov.kh or by phone (017 890 656) to find a job locally. They can also register for free vocational training courses at any MoLVT vocational training institutes.
- For Cambodian nationals aspiring to find employment in Thailand:
 - Private Recruitment Agencies and relevant officials have to suspend sending MOU and seasonal workers to Thailand until further notice. Recruitment agencies should liaise with Thai employers or Thai employer's associations, and Thai and Cambodian authorities, to facilitate deployment of workers as necessary and when allowed.

Orientation on online registration procedures for work and stay permit

Reference: The Labour Attaché Office's [Official Facebook page](#), 18 January 2021

On 18 January 2021, the Labour Attaché of the Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Bangkok published a video, informing irregular Cambodian workers residing in Thailand about the details of the regularization process summarized on page 1. of this Flash Update.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Domestic travel restrictions eased from 23 December 2020 to 31 January 2021

Reference: The Prime Minister's Office, N.1414/PMO, 23 December 2020

The Prime Minister has further eased restrictions during the period from 23 December 2020 to 31 January 2021. Details are listed on the [National COVID-19 Taskforce Official Website](#). Key measures are listed below, and all permitted activities are subject to compliance with physical distancing and COVID-19 prevention measures:

- Charter flights from countries/areas affected by COVID-19 are suspended, except humanitarian flights, which are allowed with approval of the National COVID-19 Taskforce on a case by case basis.
- Passengers on charter flights from permitted countries with no COVID-19 cases must not transit or have originated from countries or areas affected by COVID-19.
- The issuance of tourist visas is suspended.
- Local, traditional, and international Points of Entry (POEs) remain closed. On an exceptional basis, individuals with urgent need for entry/departure are allowed through international POE with permission from the National COVID-19 Taskforce.
- Concerts and sporting events with big gatherings are not allowed.
- Further promotion of awareness raising on COVID-19 and prevention measures in communities nationwide even if there are no

known active cases of COVID-19 in Lao People's Democratic Republic.

- To prevent COVID-19 from entering the country, the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Public Security and relevant local authorities must enhance monitoring of entries and exits through all border checkpoints to ensure that there are no cases of irregular migration.
- The National COVID-19 Taskforce must develop tracking devices to monitor movements of Lao and non-Lao nationals entering Lao People's Democratic Republic, and identify the regulations and fees for using these devices.
- The National COVID-19 Taskforce will maintain the existing quarantine centres in the country and provide more quarantine centres in case of the arrival of large groups of migrants.



IOM Lao People's Democratic Republic visiting and distributing direct assistance packages to returning migrants at KM27 Quarantine Centre in Vientiane capital, 11 January 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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