

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

IOM has joined the [Call to Action on Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 on Remittances](#), drawing attention to the importance of remittance flows for migrants and their families, as well as for economies particularly in low and middle-income countries. The Call to Action is addressed to policymakers, regulators and remittance service providers. It was initiated by the governments of Switzerland and the United Kingdom, and is open for all countries and like-minded partners to join.

IOM's newly launched Issue Brief on **COVID-19: Policies and Impact on Seasonal Agricultural Workers** is now available for download [HERE](#).

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 Order extended to 30 June

Reference: [Royal Gazette no. 37 special edition no. 122](#), 26 May 2020

The Royal Thai Government has officially extended the State of Emergency Order until 30 June, meaning the measures introduced previously, including nationwide curfew and international and domestic travel restrictions, have all been extended until 30 June, subject to further announcements by national and/or provincial authorities.

IOM has summarized relevant policies in previous weekly Flash Updates:

- Nationwide curfew: the daily nationwide curfew remains in place but now begins at 11:00 PM, ending at 4:00 AM. More details are available [HERE](#).
- Easing of restrictions for businesses: page 1 in [IOM's Flash Update #10](#)
- Incoming flight ban: pages 1 and 2 in [IOM's Flash Update #10](#)

- Provincial restrictions: travelers between provinces must comply with provincial regulations, which have been consolidated by Thailand's Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) on this [website](#).

10 domestic airports resume operations

Reference: [Manager online news](#), 22 May 2020

Thailand's Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) announced that from 21 May, 10 domestic airports can resume operations and open for domestic commercial flights, including to and from Udon Thani, Khon Kaen, Suratthani, Ubon Ratchathani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phitsanulok, Trang, Sakon Nakhon, Roi Et and Nakhon Phanom. Airlines can institute their own specific hygiene requirements, but CCSA recommends passengers wear masks during the entire journey, and that they follow COVID-19 prevention measures of both departure and arrival provinces.

Myanmar

Updates on safe return arrangements for Myanmar migrants in Thailand

Reference: General Administrative Department, Myawaddy

Following coordination between the Embassy of Myanmar in Thailand and Thai authorities, 5,977 Myanmar migrants were safely repatriated from Thailand

between 23 and 27 May. The Myanmar Labour Attaché Office – Thailand [Facebook page](#) continues to post a list of confirmed passengers on a daily basis. For more details on these arrangements, please see page 2 in [IOM's Flash Update #10](#).



Latrines provided by IOM Myanmar at the quarantine centre in Myawaddy, 15 May 2020

Instructions to recruitment agencies for sending migrants to Thailand

Reference: Department of Labour, Letter No. 3/27/ahlanya (migration) 2020/ 12001, 22 May 2020

The Department of Labour issued a letter to the Myanmar Overseas Employment Agency Federation (MOEAF) regarding overseas employment of Myanmar migrants in Thailand, announcing that:

- Overseas recruitment procedures are on hold until 31 May.
- According to the letter, after 31 May, Thai authorities may issue official arrangements to

accept migrant workers, with possible requirements on health certification and health checks at points of entry.

- If recruitment resumes, all private recruitment agencies (PRAs) must follow the regular recruitment process and any additional COVID-19 related instructions.
- The PRAs should communicate any updates from the Department of Labour in Myanmar to Thai employers.
- In cases of misconduct the Department of Labour in Myanmar will revoke the license of the PRA/s concerned.



IOM Cambodia distributing bags, information materials, and MRC contact numbers to Cambodian returnees at Ou Beichoan border checkpoint, 26 May 2020

Cambodia

Cambodian workers in Thailand can contact Embassy for support

Reference: The Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Thailand, Letter No. 376/20/SKB2, 26 May 2020

Following the extension of Thailand's Emergency Decree until 30 June, the Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Thailand issued a letter instructing Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand to comply with the announced measures. Cambodian nationals encountering any issues or seeking further information can contact the Embassy via the [official Facebook page](#) or telephone: (+66) 092 8050 561 and (+66) 094 092 5905.

Additional measures to assist businesses and workers impacted by COVID-19

Reference: [Government of Cambodia](#), 26 May 2020

The Government has announced further measures to support local businesses and internal workers, including:

- Continuation of tax exemptions for hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, and travel agencies operating in Phnom Penh city, Siem Reap province, Preah Sihnouk province, Kep province, Kampot province, Bavet city, and Poipet city for another two months from 1 June to 31 July 2020.
- Continuation of exemptions for both worker and employer contributions to the Social Security Fund (SSF). This exemption applies to businesses

whose operations are suspended and employees of businesses who are registered under the SSF.

- The Government will implement an additional Social Assistance Program in June 2020, targeting those holding poverty cards as well as children under the age of five, people with a disability, elderly people above the age of 60, and people living with HIV.

The full list of announced measures can be found [HERE](#).

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Government urges employers to pay workers impacted by COVID-19

Reference: [Vientiane Times](#), 27 May 2020

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) is planning to support workers who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Labour Administration reaffirmed through the media that the rights and benefits of workers would be protected.

MoLSW met with business representatives and company managers in Special Economic Zones to discuss a joint response to the impact of COVID-19 on workers and employment. Under the current Law on Social Security (which entered into force on 13 August 2018), employers are obliged to pay wages to employees and to maintain social welfare benefits for those who have been stood down during the pandemic. Workers can seek support from Labour and Social Welfare departments and offices in respective provinces and districts, as well as the Lao Federation of Trade Unions, if their employer refuses to pay wages in these circumstances.

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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