Siam Legal International Reports New Traffic Police Rules Bringing Greater Transparency to Roadside Stops

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Bangkok, Thailand - November 05, 2026 -
Siam Legal International, a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience in Thailand, has highlighted a new nationwide directive from the Royal Thai Police that changes how traffic officers stop, warn, and fine motorists. Under the directive, officers must now show their faces during routine enforcement, consider warnings before fining many minor or first-time offenders, and avoid pressuring drivers into paying fines at the roadside.

The written order, issued on October 25, applies to traffic police in Bangkok and across Thailand's provincial police regions. For expats and travelers, the practical result is that a routine traffic stop should now be more transparent.

Officers conducting routine traffic stops can no longer wear balaclavas, full-face hoods, or other coverings that hide their identity. Surgical masks and sunglasses may still be used for protection from sun, dust, or pollution, but officers must remove them when checking a violation or issuing a ticket.

For minor offenses, officers are instructed to consider a warning first, particularly for first-time offenders. Before deciding whether to issue a fine, police are directed to check the driver's previous warning records through the police ticket management system, and repeat violations may then face progressively higher penalties.

The warning-first approach does not apply to dangerous conduct. This includes wrong-way driving, running red lights, drink driving, and racing on public roads.

During a stop, officers must remain identifiable, explain the relevant rule, and provide information about lawful payment procedures and deadlines. They are prohibited from coercing, threatening, or pressuring motorists into making immediate roadside payments, and soliciting or accepting money or other improper benefits is also banned.

Drivers may still receive a legitimate ticket, but they should not be pressured to settle it on the spot. The directive also reinforces supervision of roadside checkpoints, with police commanders responsible for ensuring officers follow the required uniform, identification, warning, and payment procedures.

"This directive gives every motorist a clearer picture of what to expect at a traffic stop, from an identifiable officer to a proper explanation of the rule and the lawful way to pay," said Rex Baay, Senior Immigration Consultant and Operations Manager at Siam Legal International. "For foreign drivers in particular, knowing that a legitimate ticket does not have to be settled at the roadside should make routine stops far more straightforward."

The measures revisit a long-running concern over masked traffic officers, who have often been referred to in Thailand as ninja police. By requiring officers to remain identifiable and placing responsibility on commanders, the directive aims to bring greater accountability to roadside enforcement.

Foreign drivers should carry a valid driver's license, vehicle registration, and insurance information. Visitors generally need their home country license together with an International Driving Permit, while long-term residents may need a Thai license depending on their situation.

At a checkpoint, drivers are advised to remain calm, present the requested documents, and ask for clarification if needed. Cash should not be handed over outside a clearly documented lawful process. Siam Legal's traffic police update covers the new rules and what drivers should expect at a roadside stop.

For serious offenses, accidents, or disputes, legal advice can help clarify the next step. Whether visiting Thailand for a short stay or building a life in the country, staying informed about changes such as this directive can help drivers make the most of their time on Thai roads.

Siam Legal International is a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience serving foreign and Thai clients, with offices in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. The firm provides comprehensive legal support across immigration, property transactions, business law, family law, and litigation.

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