Siam Legal International Clarifies the Status of New Thailand Airport Fees and Baggage Rules

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Bangkok, Thailand - November 06, 2026 -
Siam Legal International, a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience assisting Thai and foreign clients, is clarifying which airport travel charges are now in force following the Ministry of Finance's decision on October 22, 2026, to place the proposed departure tax on hold. The firm is also setting out how new checked baggage inspection rules, in effect since October 16, 2026, apply to travelers departing Thailand.

With several fee proposals reported at the same time, travelers have found it difficult to separate charges already in effect from those still under discussion. At present, only one of the three charges applies.

The passenger service charge of THB 1,120 has been enforced since June 20, 2026. It applies each time a passenger departs Thailand for another country from any of the six major international airports in the Airports of Thailand network, and it is already bundled into the ticket price.

The proposed departure tax would add THB 1,000 for each departure by air, with a legal ceiling of THB 5,000 per departure. It would apply to everyone, including Thai citizens and foreign residents, with exemptions only

for children aged two and under, transit passengers, and airline crew on duty. Departures by land and sea would initially be exempt, and no new date has been set since the Ministry of Finance placed the measure on hold.

The third charge is a proposed tourist entry fee of THB 450 for each foreign tourist entering Thailand by air, land, or sea, which would include insurance coverage during the stay. Because this measure is handled separately by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the pause on the departure tax does not apply to it. Work permit holders, diplomatic passport holders, transit passengers, airline crew, and children under two would be exempt. The proposal still awaits approval from the National Tourism Policy Committee and the Thai Cabinet, and it would take effect 180 days after publication in the Royal Thai Gazette.

If both proposals proceeded at their current rates, a foreign tourist flying in and out could pay up to THB 2,570 per visit in combined charges. Neither draft includes a general exemption for foreign residents, so a resident who flies out four times a year would pay THB 4,000 in departure tax alone.

"The key distinction for anyone traveling from Thailand right now is between what is already in force and what is still a proposal," said Rex Baay, Senior Immigration Consultant and Operations Manager at Siam Legal International. "Only the passenger service charge applies today, and it is already included in the fare. Long-term residents who travel frequently would feel the departure tax most, because the draft offers no general exemption for them."

Separately, a Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) notification that took effect on October 16, 2026 gives airport security officers legal authority to open checked baggage without the owner present. CAAT has stated that the rules do not permit routine or random searches, and that officers may open a bag only when the X-ray scan gives reasonable grounds to suspect a prohibited item, a dangerous item, or a threat to aviation security.

The rules apply to all domestic and international flights departing from Thai airports, but not to bags on flights arriving in Thailand. Prohibited items found during an inspection can be confiscated and will not be returned. According to CAAT, a bag opened outside this procedure or by unauthorized staff is not covered by the new rules, and the opening may be unlawful.

Travelers are encouraged to fit checked bags with TSA locks, as officers may cut or force open a non-TSA lock without compensation. Passengers may carry up to two power banks in cabin baggage, each labeled with its capacity, and units between 100 and 160 watt-hours require airline approval. E-cigarettes and vapes are illegal in Thailand altogether.

The practical steps covered in Siam Legal's Thailand airport rules update include photographing a bag inside

and out before check-in and keeping valuables, essential documents, and fragile items in carry-on baggage. The departure tax and tourist entry fee proposals remain under review, and their status may change as government bodies reach decisions.

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

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