



Siam Legal International Advises Foreign Nationals on Thailand Arrival Compliance as Mandatory Digital Arrival Card System Enters Second Year

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Siam Legal International, a Thailand-based full-service law firm with more than 20 years of operation, is advising foreign nationals to review their arrival compliance obligations before entering Thailand, following the continued implementation of the country's mandatory Thailand Digital Arrival Card system.

The Thailand Digital Arrival Card, or TDAC, replaced the paper TM6 arrival form in May 2025 and applies to foreign nationals entering Thailand by air, land, or sea. The system is administered through the official Thai immigration portal at tdac.immigration.go.th, and submission is required within 3 days before arrival. Travelers must provide their passport details, flight number, accommodation address, and a short health declaration. The process takes approximately 5 minutes, carries no government fee, and generates an email confirmation that travelers must present upon arrival. A new submission is required for every entry into Thailand, as the TDAC does not carry over between trips.

The firm notes that, despite the system being in place since May 2025, some arriving foreign nationals continue to experience issues at the immigration checkpoint. Common problems include failing to submit the TDAC in advance, using third-party websites that charge fees for a free government service, or presenting incomplete arrival information at the immigration desk. Travelers are advised to complete the TDAC only through the official government portal and to treat any website charging a processing fee with caution.

“The most common mistakes at the immigration desk are preventable,” said Rex Baay, Senior Immigration Consultant and Operations Manager at Siam Legal International. “Travelers who arrive prepared, with their TDAC confirmed, their purpose of visit clear, and their accommodation and onward travel details readily available, are less likely to face delays. Those who arrive underprepared, or who casually mention activities inconsistent with their visa category, may face additional screening that could have been avoided with proper preparation.”

Beyond the TDAC, the firm advises arriving foreign nationals to review their passport entry stamp before leaving the immigration area. The stamp includes a date preceded by the word “until,” which represents the traveler’s permitted stay, not the expiry date of the visa. These are two separate and legally distinct dates. A visa determines whether a foreign national is permitted to enter Thailand and under what conditions. The permitted stay is the specific period granted at the point of entry, issued at the discretion of the immigration officer.

One common cause of accidental overstay is the assumption that the permitted stay runs until the visa expiry date. A foreign national holding a 6-month multiple-entry tourist visa, for example, may be granted only 60 days per entry. Remaining in Thailand past the stamped date constitutes an overstay, regardless of what appears on the visa page. Errors or illegible stamps should be addressed at the immigration desk before the traveler exits the terminal. Corrections made inside the checkpoint can often be handled quickly, while corrections pursued after departure may be significantly more time-consuming and costly.

Foreign nationals staying in private accommodation should also confirm whether their landlord has filed a TM30 report. Under Thai immigration rules, landlords and property owners are required to notify immigration authorities of the address of any foreign national staying at their property within 24 hours of arrival. Hotels and serviced apartments typically process this automatically as part of standard check-in procedures. Private rental properties may not.

A missing TM30 filing often becomes an issue later, when a foreign national attempts to extend a visa, complete a 90-day report, or process another immigration matter requiring a registered address. Foreign nationals staying in private accommodation should confirm with their landlord at check-in whether the filing has been completed. If it has not, the landlord may need to file the report with the relevant immigration office.

For foreign nationals who visit Thailand regularly or intend to establish a longer-term presence, Siam Legal notes that several long-stay visa options may reduce the administrative burden associated with repeated tourist entries. The Destination Thailand Visa, or DTV, offers a 5-year multiple-entry visa with stays of up to 180 days per entry and is available to eligible remote workers, freelancers, and participants in approved Thai Soft Power activities. The retirement visa, available to applicants aged 50 and above, provides annual extensions for those who meet the financial requirements. The Long-Term Resident Visa, or LTR Visa, is a 10-year visa targeting high-income individuals, skilled professionals, and retirees who meet specific income and asset thresholds established by the Board of Investment. The Thailand Privilege Visa, a government-backed long-stay membership program, provides extended multi-year access with a range of privileges for qualified applicants.

Each pathway carries its own eligibility criteria, documentation requirements, and ongoing reporting obligations. The firm recommends that foreign nationals conduct a proper eligibility review before applying, particularly if they intend to work remotely, retire, invest, or remain in Thailand for extended periods.

Foreign nationals seeking guidance on arrival requirements, visa options, or ongoing immigration developments in Thailand can review the new visa rules in Thailand with an immigration lawyer before making travel or long-stay plans. Siam Legal International provides immigration, visa, property, business, and legal services to foreign nationals and expatriates throughout Thailand.

Siam Legal International is a Thailand-based law firm with offices in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. The firm provides legal and immigration services to foreign nationals, expatriates, investors, families, and businesses in Thailand. Its practice areas include immigration, corporate law, property, family law, litigation, criminal defense, notarial services, and related legal support.

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American-managed Thailand law firm with 22+ years' experience. Experts in corporate setup, BOI, FBL, family & divorce, property, litigation, immigration, notary, wills, contracts & due diligence across Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya

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