Siam Legal International Outlines New Entry Rules as 30-Day Visa Exemption Comes Into Effect

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Bangkok, Thailand - September 15, 2026 -
Siam Legal International, a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience assisting foreign nationals in Thailand, is outlining Thailand's new visa exemption framework, which took effect on September 15, 2026, replacing the special 60-day exemption that had been in place since 2024.

Under the new framework, nationals of 60 countries and territories may enter Thailand for tourism without a visa for up to 30 days, subject to standard immigration requirements. Travelers who wish to remain longer may apply for a single extension of up to 30 additional days at a Thai immigration office, subject to officer approval, bringing an eligible stay to a maximum of 60 days in total. Nationals of two countries qualify for a separate 15-day exemption, while the Visa on Arrival scheme has been narrowed to cover only three nationalities.

The revised rules also introduce new limits for travelers entering by land or sea. Under the exemption, entries through land or sea border checkpoints are generally capped at two per calendar year, with exceptions in place for nationals of Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, and Singapore. The cap does not apply to arrivals by air, and the Ministry of Interior retains authority to designate additional qualifying nationalities. Existing bilateral

visa exemption agreements between Thailand and specific countries remain unaffected and continue to operate under their own separate terms.

Officials have also reiterated that eligibility for the exemption does not guarantee entry. Travelers may still be asked to present supporting documents, including proof of onward or return travel, confirmed accommodation, and sufficient funds, and all arrivals must complete the Thailand Digital Arrival Card within three days of arrival. Immigration officers retain discretion over each entry, and travelers are advised to check the permitted length of stay recorded on their entry stamp rather than assume the full exemption period applies automatically.

Rex Baay, Senior Immigration Consultant and Operations Manager at Siam Legal International, said, "The shift from 60 days to 30 days changes the calculation for anyone who has been relying on the exemption to spend extended periods in Thailand." Baay said travelers who previously used repeated short-term entries to remain in the country for months at a time should expect greater scrutiny under the revised framework, particularly at land and sea checkpoints where the new entry caps apply. He added that the change is a useful prompt for long-term visitors to review whether a formal visa category, such as the Destination Thailand Visa, the Long Term Resident visa, or the Thailand Privilege program, better matches their actual purpose and length of stay.

Siam Legal International advises clients on selecting the entry category or long-term status that fits their individual circumstances, including age, finances, employment, and family situation, rather than relying on repeated exemption entries that may draw additional questioning at the border. The firm works with clients across categories including the Non-Immigrant B visa for employment, retirement status for eligible retirees, and long-term residency programs for qualifying applicants. Baay said the firm has fielded a steady increase in consultation requests since the Royal Gazette publication in late August, with many clients asking whether their existing travel patterns would still be viable once the new rules took effect.

Additional detail on the new entry rules and how they affect travelers already in Thailand is available through a Siam Legal Thailand visa exemption update.

Siam Legal International is a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience representing foreign nationals across immigration, property, corporate, and litigation matters in Thailand, with offices in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. The firm advises individuals and businesses on residency planning, property transactions, corporate structuring, and dispute resolution.

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Siam Legal International

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 & more.

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