

Major changes to UAE visa rules implemented



The UAE government recently announced

visa reforms to the current system that will benefit families and visitors. The initiative is also aimed to help job seekers find suitable employment. Here is what you need to know:

- 1. A new insurance scheme** Prior to the new insurance scheme, each worker was required to submit a mandated deposit of AED 30,000. This has been replaced with a revised cost of only AED 60 per worker. The insurance policy includes:
 - a) End of service benefits
 - b) Vacation allowance
 - c) Overtime allowance
 - d) Unpaid wages
 - e) Workers return ticket
 - f) Cases of work injuryThe aim of the revised insurance policy is to ensure that employers will be able to invest better and contribute to the overall economic growth.
- 2. No entrance fees for transit passengers** Transit passengers are exempt from paying an entrance fee for the first 48 hours of their stay in the UAE. This can be extended to 96 hours for a fee of AED 50. A transit visa can easily be acquired from the express counters at the passport-control halls across airports in the UAE.
- 3. The stamp of “no entry” will not apply if you leave the country willingly** For visitors who have overstayed in the UAE, they need not worry about receiving a “no-entry” stamp on their passports should they voluntarily leave the country.
- 4. 6 month visa for employment seekers** A new short-term visa will become available for those visitors who have overstayed in the UAE in order to find employment. This temporary visa shall hold a validity period of 6 months in total and be free of charge.
- 5. Illegal immigrants may exit the country with minimal consequences** Residents illegally entering the UAE will now be given the opportunity to exit the country and receive a “no-entry” stamp which shall be effective for only two (2) years. During the two year period, the individual will not be permitted to enter the UAE.
- 6. No need to exit for visa stamping** As per the new rule, individuals will no longer be required to exit the country in order to adjust or renew their visas. He/she may remain in the country and make the necessary visa amendment for a small fee.
- 7. Make the job market accessible** The cabinet have decided to “empower people of determination”. This is to enable those people seeking employment opportunities to access the job market with ease in various sectors. The cabinet have also decided to set up the Asian Paralympic Committee in the UAE to serve as a hub that provides courses and training workshops for “people of determination”.
- 8. UAE and Russian citizens** The Government of the UAE and Russian Federation have now allowed mutual visa exemption requirements in order for their citizens to visit each other’s countries with ease. This move aims to boost tourism and investment opportunities in both the countries.
- 9. Visas for Widows and Divorcees** Residency Visas will be extended for widows and divorced women and their children for one year without the need for a sponsor, starting from the date of spouse’s death or divorce. The new visa rules aims to give women the opportunity to look for suitable employment prospects.
- 10. Visas for Students** Students holding residency visas that are sponsored by the parents will also be renewed. Children under the sponsorship of their parents, after completing their university or high school, or those turning 18 years of age, will be given a one-year residency visa that can be renewed for another year.
- 11. Visas for Visitors and Tourists** For visitors and tourists in the UAE whose entry permits will expire, they will be permitted an extension of 30 days without leaving the country. The extension can be granted twice only, irrespective of the main duration of the original visa.