

Extension of Stay for Purpose of Retirement

If you meet the age and financial resources requirements, Thai Immigration will grant you a one year stay that can be renewed annually without having to leave the Kingdom. You will need to apply for an extension with the Immigration Office that has jurisdiction for the area where you live. Also, a retiree's non-Thai spouse can obtain a one-year extension of their Non-Immigrant "O" Visa based on the retiree's qualification (they do not have to meet the age and/or financial resources requirements).



Requirements

To qualify for a one year extension based on being a retiree wanting to live in Thailand, you will need to meet the following age and financial resource conditions:

1. You must be at least 50 years of age
2. You must have the equivalent of 800,000 Baht in financial resources to show that you can live in the Kingdom without working. The financial resources can be cash on deposit in a Thai bank, an income of at least 65,000 Baht per month, or a combination of the two that together totals the 800,000 Baht.
 - a. If you are using monthly income for all or any part of the requirement, you will need a certification from your Embassy as to the amount of monthly income (UK citizens in Pattaya can obtain this document from the UK Honorary Consul's office adjacent to Pattaya Immigration). Each Embassy has its own requirements for supporting documentation, if any.
 - b. You must have a Thai bank account even if you are using only monthly income certified by your Embassy. An article in *Pattaya Today* English language newspaper in May 2009 suggests the bank account show at least 1,000 Baht on deposit. However, an expat that recently renewed (June 2009) using only income to qualify reported that the Pattaya Immigration Official told him the next time he renewed he should still have at least 10,000 Baht in the bank..
 - c. If you are using at least 800,000 Baht in a Thai bank account, you do not need an Embassy certification. Current policy is the money must have been on deposit for at least 60 days before the first application for extension and for at least 90 days for subsequent applications.
3. Hold a Non-Immigrant "O" or "O-A" Visa (If you qualify, except for not having a Non-Immigrant Visa, Thai Immigration will permit you to apply for this visa within Thailand - fee is 2,000 Baht for the Visa in addition to the visa extension fee in item 4 below).
4. Pay the Extension Application Fee of 1,900 Baht.

TIPS: *The following tips are based on report(s) from fellow expats:*

1. *Entering Thailand using the Visa Exemption or a Tourist Visa, contact the Immigration Office where you plan to apply for a Non-Immigrant "O" Visa to determine if they require you have a minimum number of days remaining on your permitted "stay" time in the Kingdom. If a Visa Exemption, do so promptly as there are reports on Thaivisa.com that you must have at least 21 of your 30 days remaining.*
2. *If you entered using the Visa Exemption or a Tourist Visa and opened a Thai bank account with the 800,000 Baht to meet the financial resource requirement, but it has not been there for the required 60 days - Pattaya Immigration will still issue a Non-Immigrant "O" Visa, thus extending your stay for 90 days - when the funds have been on deposit the required amount of time, you can then apply for the one year extension of stay (which is usually one year from the 90 days permitted upon issuance of the Non-Immigrant Visa).*
3. *Some expats using the 800,000 Baht in the bank to qualify do not like the idea of having to have these funds on deposit for the 60 (initial) or 90 (renewal) day time requirement as they would rather have the funds earning a higher rate of interest than that paid by Thai banks - if you have a small amount of monthly income that can be certified by your Embassy, by using a combination of income and funds in the bank, there is no requirement that funds be held on deposit for any specified time period. For example, you have a monthly pension totaling 6,000 Baht per month; this would be an annual income of 72,000 Baht. You would then need at least 728,000 Baht, which can be deposited a few days in advance of the application.*
4. *Do not wait till the last day to renew your extension of stay - give yourself time to take care of any "hitches" that might arise as Thai Immigration is sometimes known to make changes without advance notice.*

Documents Needed

The following documents are usually the only ones required. However, it is within the Immigration Official's discretion to ask for additional items:

1. You will need the **basic documents** for an extension application.
2. Original Letter from your Thai Bank certifying your account and showing your balance (the letter should be dated within the last 7 days – most Expats obtain the day before applying).
3. Photocopy of your bank passbook Identity page showing name and account number and page(s) showing the last 3 months activity (it is recommended that you update your passbook on the same day you get your bank letter so that both balances will agree)
4. IF you are using monthly income in total or in part to meet the financial requirements, an original "Embassy Letter" attesting to your monthly income. The letter should not be more than one-year old. Generally, each Embassy has its own form for this letter/certification.

5. If your non-Thai spouse is applying, they will need to submit the basic documents (item 1).

Process at Pattaya Immigration

The process and length of time will vary depending on the Immigration Office where you apply. At Pattaya Immigration, the application process generally takes less than an hour. However, Immigration still has to record the information in their computers to complete the process. Consequently, depending on the time of day and/or the number of applications in process, they often ask that you return the next day to pick up your passport. The process is rather straight forward.

1. Complete the application on both sides and be sure to sign in the appropriate place on each page. Also, be sure that you have all the required documents (in case of photocopies, have the originals available in case the Immigration Officer wishes to compare them to the photocopy).
2. Obtain a queue number – the number machine is up front next to the information counter - push the button for “retirement” and obtain your number. The processing station will be denoted by a letter and number along with your queue number. The number being served is shown on the electronic display board – also, there is a verbal page when a number is called.
3. When called, go to the retirement station (will be shown on the electronic board and the desk will have the station number displayed) – present your passport and your documents to the Immigration Officer at the desk – he will take a few minutes to look over the documents, staple your photo to the application, highlighting certain information on the documents – if your package is complete (to his satisfaction), he will ask you to look into a camera (remove any glasses and/or hat) while he takes your picture and then he will direct you to the cashier and ask you to return once you have paid the 1,900 Baht fee.
4. Upon return with the receipt for the fee, he will usually direct you to the desk behind him occupied by a lady Immigration Police Captain (if she has another applicant at her desk, you may need to wait near her desk until she directs you to sit down). At this desk, she will go over the documents and prepare a form, which is written in Thai. She may also ask you one or more questions, most common is whether you rent or own your house/condo. When she completes the form, she will ask you to sign it. She will then hand you a laminated ticket with a number – attaching a similarly numbered ticket to your passport. She will then tell you when you can come back and pick up your passport – if you go in early in the morning, it may be that afternoon – if later in the day or there are a lot of applications pending from the previous day, she may direct you to return at a particular time the following day.
5. When you return, you do not need to get a queue number. Just go to the lady Captain’s desk – she will take your numbered ticket and hand you your passport, which will have the visa extension stamped in it.

TIP: Generally, most of our members have found that the process goes smoothly if you remember to: (1) dress appropriately, e.g., shirt with collar and trousers, and (2) be polite and not raise your voice, even if you think things are becoming a bit frustrating.