



MIDDLE EAST UPDATES

FRAGOMEN

FRAGOMEN MONTHLY MENA NEWSLETTER: INSIGHTS ON IMMIGRATION, CORPORATE, AND SOCIAL SECURITY SERVICES IN THE MENA REGION

United Arab Emirates

14 June 2024 - Stricter Measures for Salary Calculation for Scientists and Specialists Golden Visa Category

Highly skilled professionals without a government nomination applying for the UAE Golden Visa under the 'Scientists and Specialists' category must now ensure that their basic salary is no less than AED 30,000 per month, as the authorities in the Emirate of Dubai have implemented stricter measures for salary calculation to meet the required threshold.

01 July 2024 – Abu Dhabi Introduces a Unified Economic License

Abu Dhabi authorities have introduced a Unified Economic License scheme, under which a single license reference number is used across a single unified Abu Dhabi registry. This scheme – developed by the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development and the Abu Dhabi Free Zones Council – aims to establish consistent standards for establishing a business in Abu Dhabi. Previously, the requirements and procedures varied across the emirate. For instance, some free zones required only a copy of shareholders' passports and could issue licenses within a day; while others requested a business plan, a proof of address, and documentation regarding a company's source of funds, and would take longer to complete.

01 July 2024 – New Mandatory Advertising License in Abu Dhabi

Effective July 1, 2024, social media influencers and businesses in Abu Dhabi promoting services and products for profit must obtain an advertising license from the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development in addition to holding a UAE Media Council permit.

Saudi Arabia

13 June 2024 – Relaxed Rules for Foreign Law Firms Forthcoming

Law firms that are 100% foreign owned will soon be able to practice in Saudi Arabia, pending a legislative amendment. Currently, to be able to operate in Saudi Arabia, foreign-owned law firms must partner with a Saudi legal entity. Furthermore, foreign law firms are currently restricted to advising and acting on international law, foreign jurisdiction laws, and alternative dispute resolution.

04 July 2024 -Fines for Delayed Submission of Financial Statements

Effective July 1, 2024, the Ministry of Commerce has started fining companies that do not file their financial statements to authorities on time. The deadline for filing financial statements through the Qawaem platform is six months from the end of a company's financial year (which is determined according to each company's internal rules). Previously, there were no fines for late filing of financial statements.

05 July 2024 - Delays Expected in Visa Application and Attestation Processing

There is currently a delay in processing applications and document attestations at the Saudi embassy in Egypt, due to a backlog of applications being cleared and limited embassy staff available to manage them.

05 July 2024 - New In-Person Work Visa Application Requirements in the United Kingdom

Effective July 5, 2024, applicants in the United Kingdom seeking to obtain work or temporary work visas for Saudi Arabia must appear in person at the Tasheer Saudi Visa Center in London and provide biometric data. These requirements are in addition to the standard application documentation, which must still be provided. This policy does not affect individuals who are eligible for a visa-on-arrival for tourism purposes or individuals who qualify for a Saudi Electronic Visa Waiver for tourism, business, study, medical treatment, or *Umrah* pilgrimage.

KUWAIT

14 June 2024 – Work Permit Rules Revised, Application Fees Increased, Changed Employer Transfer Rules

Kuwait has implemented several revisions to its work permit system. First, work permits no longer distinguish between local or foreign workers. Second, the standard government processing fee for a work permit for foreign workers is now KWD 325, up from KWD 175. Some foreign companies may be exempt from the increased fees, but it is understood that they will only be notified of their exemption at the time of fee payment. Third, foreign workers who change employers within three years of being granted their work permit must now pay an early transfer fee of KWD 300. Previously,

employer transfers were typically not allowed in the first six months of employment; while any transfer within six to 12 months was subject to an early transfer fee of KWD 300; and any transfer after 12 months was allowed without any fee. These amendments grant employers greater flexibility in work permit allocation, while conversely increasing permit costs and introducing a distinct transfer fee framework for foreign employees, potentially affecting employer budgets and altering the job mobility landscape.

MIDDLE EAST

27 June 2024 - Travel and Mobility Considerations: Situation in the Middle East

Recent developments indicate a notable decline in the security conditions within the region, particularly in Lebanon. This has prompted numerous governments worldwide to either sustain existing travel advisories or advise against all travel to Lebanon. Earlier this week, the Kuwaiti government has advised its nationals in Lebanon to evacuate and is coordinating flights for this purpose. In light of these circumstances, it is advisable for businesses to carefully review and possibly revise their travel policies concerning Lebanon. Companies should consider alternative strategies to ensure the continuity of their operations should the situation escalate further.

ABOUT FRAGOMEN

Fragomen is a leading firm dedicated to immigration services worldwide. The firm has nearly 5,500 professionals and staff in 62 offices located in the Americas, Asia Pacific and EMEA. Overall, Fragomen offers support in more than 170 countries.

We are structured to support all aspects of global immigration, including strategic planning, efficiency, quality management, compliance, government relations, reporting, and case management and processing. These capabilities allow us to represent a broad range of companies, organizations and individuals, working in partnership with clients to facilitate the transfer of employees worldwide.

Our Middle East and North Africa (MENA) practice also provides corporate services, including social security assistance, end-to-end corporate setup, corporate secretarial services, corporate amendments, restructuring activities and more. Our corporate services and immigration professionals have extensive experience working with multinational businesses, conglomerates, local employers, start-ups and individual investors. We have a deep understanding of the MENA region and maintain strong professional relationships with relevant authorities.

To learn more about how we can assist you, please visit our website at www.fragomen.com or contact us at middleeast@fragomen.com.