



## **IMMIGRATION DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MENA REGION**

Please visit our dedicated microsite <https://www.fragomen.com/about/news/immigration-update-coronavirus> for details on worldwide immigration and travel restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic.

### **United Arab Emirates**

#### ***07 December 2021 - Changes to Working Week Announced for Public Sector Employees***

The government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced that effective January 1, 2022, [it will adopt a four-and-a-half-day working week for all public sector employees](#), with weekend commencing on Friday afternoons and work resuming on Mondays. Additionally, the change to the working week includes revised working hours for all public sector entities as per the following:

- Monday to Thursday 07:30 to 15:30; and
- Friday 07:30 to 12:00.

When this is implemented, UAE government offices will function on a similar schedule as most of the rest of the world, making it easier to complete transactions and process applications. This transition will affect private sector employers, as they are expected to align their labour schedules with UAE government entities after this change is in effect. As per the new UAE labour law, employees are entitled to at least one rest day per week, and it is up to the employer to decide what day that is. Any reduction to the total number of working hours for employees in the private sector will have to be mutually agreed upon between the contracting parties (as per the new law, ordinary working hours should be eight hours per day or 48 hours a week).

#### ***07 December 2021 - New Federal Law on Foreign Nationals' Entry and Residency Implemented***

The government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has implemented a new federal law regulating entry and residency of foreign nationals which applies to all jurisdictions in the country, including free zones. The new law replaces the existing regulations from 1973 with its subsequent amendments and is effective immediately. The law does not introduce any major changes to the existing immigration process;

however, it is expected that relevant amendments will be introduced along with the executive regulations to the law that are likely to be published in the coming months.

The new law assigns the responsibility of its enforcement to the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Port Security (FAICCPs); it provides a list of general conditions for entry into the UAE as well as foreign national's obligations, including timely departure from the country upon visa cancellation or expiry. The law creates a general framework for the process of visa issuance, renewal, and cancellation (which includes the involvement of the UAE's consular authorities, where required) and prohibits conducting work activities without approval. The law grants the FAICCPs with rights to cancel any visa for reasons including public security or in the case of a breach of the applicable immigration regulations; it explains general conditions for detention and deportation, the right of a detained person to liquidate their interests in the country, and the right to return to the UAE.

Most of the new law is focused on describing penalties for violation of the applicable immigration regulations, including those for illegal entry, giving a false statement, using forged documents or for unauthorized employment of foreign nationals. It is expected that further details explaining the acts that constitute a violation and applicable fines will be issued through a Cabinet Resolution at the later stage.

### ***26 December 2021 Mandatory Appointment System Implemented for Emirates Identity Card Biometrics***

Effective immediately, individuals who are required to submit their fingerprints for the issuance of Emirates Identity Card (EID) must now book an appointment with a preferred branch of the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Port Security (FAICCPs) for the submission of biometric details. Previously, appointments were not mandatory, and applicants who were required to submit their biometric data could do so at their convenience. The appointment details, including date and time, must be specified at the time of preparing the EID registration form and are printed on the registration form along with a reference number. Individuals who are unable to attend the appointment after having confirmed it with the FAICCPs, may reschedule the appointment at the designated FAICCPs centre (it is currently not possible to amend the dates online). Additionally, applicants of 16 and above visiting any of the FAICCPs branches must hold proof of COVID-19 vaccination, or a negative result of COVID-19 PCR test conducted at most 48 hours before the visit.

Earlier in November, the FAICCPs introduced [new rules relating to the issuance of Emirates Identity Card](#), including specific deadline for the submission of biometrics and digital photograph standards.

## **ABOUT FRAGOMEN**

*Fragomen is the world's leading single-focus provider of immigration services and support. Our firm is comprised of law practices and immigration consultancies that work together to support our clients across all regions globally. At Fragomen, we leverage our collective immigration experience to offer clients targeted and trusted solutions that help them achieve their local, regional and worldwide business goals.*

*Fragomen's team of dedicated immigration professionals has extensive experience in working with multinational businesses, local employers, start-ups and individual investors. We have a deep understanding of the region and maintain strong professional relationships with*

*immigration authorities. Our MENA immigration team is supported on a global basis by over 3,800 immigration professionals in more than 50 offices worldwide. Together, we provide comprehensive immigration support in over 170 countries.*

*All we do is immigration, a sole focus that makes a considerable difference. Unlike many other providers, all of our thinking, passion and resources are dedicated to improving the immigration experiences of our clients and their employees. We have the track record, region specific experience and know-how to provide you with a streamlined and compliant immigration solution.*

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