



## Expat Counsel

# RETIREMENT VISAS IN THAILAND PART I

If you or your spouse is over 50 and want to live in Thailand, a retirement visa may be for you. There are two ways to apply for a visa to retire in Thailand. The first is by applying in your home country before you come. The visa you must apply for in this case is called the Non-Imm O-A and is discussed below.

In later articles we will explain the other alternative, conversion to a Non-Imm O visa from a tourist visa while you are already in Thailand and other issues common to both the Non-Imm O-A and the Non-Imm O, such as importation of household effects and renewal.

Okay, how do you apply for a Non-Imm O-A from outside Thailand? First, go to a Royal Thai embassy or consulate in your country of residence or your home country and get the forms. Your completed application should include your passport, which must have a remaining validity of at least

18 months. You must also supply three 4cm x 6cm photos taken within the last six months. There are two forms you must submit, the visa application form in triplicate and the personal data form.

The fee is the equivalent of 2,000 baht for a single-entry visa, or 5,000 baht for a multiple entry visa. If you are living in Thailand on a Non-Imm O-A and wish to travel outside of Thailand, you must have a multiple entry version, or the Non-Imm O-A will be cancelled when you return.

The most important requirement for the O-A visa is that you must be able to show that you have assets and/or income. There are two alternatives for this. First, you may show by copies of your bank statements that for at least three months before the application you have had the equivalent of at least 800,000 baht deposited in a bank or banks in your home country or in Thailand. The bank or banks must give an original

letter about each account confirming the accuracy of the account statement.

Second, you may submit an original income certificate from the source of the income showing you have a pension or monthly income of at least the equivalent of 65,000 baht.

You may, likewise, prove a combination of your monthly income multiplied by 12 plus bank deposit of the equivalent of a total of 800,000 baht and this will be acceptable.

You'll also have to submit a letter from the police or similar organisation in your country, issued less than three months before your application, that you have no criminal record. This must be notarised.

Finally, you'll need a medical certificate, in the form the embassy or consulate will give you, showing that you are not suffering from leprosy, an advanced stage of tuberculosis, drug addiction, elephantiasis or the

third phase of syphilis. This must be notarised and dated not more than three months before your application. If your spouse is under 50, he or she will be considered for a temporary stay under what is known as a Category O visa. This means that your spouse can only stay in Thailand for a three-month period, rather than the one-year period that you will have. This rule is recently imposed and some under-50 spouses are currently in Thailand on longer visas.

Even though you've received a Non-Imm O-A, you're still required every 90 days to file Immigration form TM.47. Also, you'll have to renew this visa every year. More on these issues next time. ■

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