



Expat Counsel

RETIREMENT VISAS IN THAILAND III

Last time we talked about some of the requirements to get a retirement visa while you are in Thailand on a tourist visa. You'll recall that to do this you must convert to a Non-Imm O visa, which is only a 90-day visa, and then extend your stay to a year for retirement purposes.

This time we'll talk about additional requirements for getting the Non-Imm O visa and some issues that apply to both the Non-Imm O visa and the Non-Imm O-A visa, the retirement visa that you must get at a Thai embassy or consulate in your home country before you come to Thailand.

An additional requirement to get the Non-Imm O is that you must show you have financial resources. One alternative to do this is to give copies of a bank passbook showing you have had at least 800,000 baht on deposit in a bank in Thailand for a minimum of three months prior to your application. You must also submit the original of a confirmation letter to this effect from the bank and documentation proving that these funds were remitted to you from outside Thailand.

We have been contacted by numerous readers who have asked whether financial resources can be proved for the Non-Imm O with funds deposited in banks outside of Thailand. For the Non-Imm O this is not possible. The deposits must be in Thailand.

If you have more than one account in Thailand and together the accounts satisfy the 800,000 baht requirement, immigration officers we talked to told us they would accept passbooks and letters from more than one bank.

Alternatively to the 800,000 baht deposit option, you may submit a letter from your embassy in Thailand certifying that you have a pension or monthly income of not less than 65,000 baht a month.

If you have both monthly income and a bank account, but neither meets the amount requirements above, a combination of monthly income multiplied by twelve plus the amount in the bank account will also be sufficient, as long as the total exceeds 800,000 baht.

Now let's talk about some issues that are the same for both Non-Imm O-A and Non-Imm O. What about your spouse, for example? For your spouse to get retirement visa status the financial requirements are the same and in addition to yours. We have also been recently told by immigration officials that they will not accept single accounts or income statements with twice the content. Instead, each spouse should have his or her own separate accounts or income statements.

What if your spouse is under 50 and also a foreigner? He or she will be considered for a Non-Imm O visa. This means your spouse on a Non-Imm O would initially receive a 90-day visa. This visa may, however, be extended to the same period as yours, by reason of stay with family. An original of the marriage certificate may be requested by the immigration official in charge of the case.

Next time we'll discuss how you can renew your retirement visa. ■

James Finch of Chavalit Finch & Partners
 finch@chavalitfinchlaw.com and
 Nilobon Tangprasit of Siam City Law Offices Limited nilobon@siamcitylaw.com
 For more information visit
 www.chavalitfinchlaw.com.

Comments? Questions? Contact us at the email addresses above.



ILLUSTRATION: NATIYA SRISAMANG