



Legal Updates

Legal Framework Governing the Licensing and Regulation of Foreign Workers in Egypt

Pursuant to the provisions of Labor Law No. 14 of 2025, the Minister of Labor issued Decree No. 279 of 2025, which establishes a comprehensive legal framework regulating the licensing of foreign workers within Egypt, setting out the procedures and conditions governing foreign employment across various sectors.

1. Scope and Definitions (Articles 1 and 2)

The decree defines key terms including the competent ministry, authority, and work — covering all types of dependent, freelance, and self-employed work. Foreign employment in the private sector, public business sector, public authorities, and the state administrative apparatus is subject to the decree's provisions, considering the principle of reciprocity and possible exemptions.

2. Work Permit Requirement (Article 3)

No foreigner may engage in any work inside Egypt without obtaining a work permit issued by the Ministry of Labor or its relevant entities, provided the foreigner is authorized to enter and reside in Egypt for work purposes.

3. Exemptions from Licensing (Article 4)

This article specifies categories exempt from the licensing requirement, including:

- Persons exempted under international agreements to which Egypt is party.
- Employees of embassies, consulates, and international organizations.
- Foreign correspondents.
- Clergy performing unpaid religious duties.
- Foreign workers on Egyptian ships outside territorial waters.
- Experts and researchers in archaeology.

- Foreign investors holding residency permits for investment purposes.

4. Employer Notification (Article 5)

Employers must notify the competent labor office within seven days of the foreigner commencing or ending work, including in exempted cases.

5. Permit Issuance Procedures and Required Documents (Article 6)

The issuance of work permits requires submission of documents including an employment contract specifying the type, location, remuneration, and duration of work, with exceptions for temporary assignments and experts covered under international agreements.

6. Conditions for Granting Permits (Article 7)

The conditions include:

- At least three years of relevant work experience.
- No competition with the national labor force.
- Actual need by the establishment.
- Obligation of the employer to train Egyptian assistants and transfer expertise.

The competent authority may waive these conditions fully or partially in justified cases.

7. Prohibited Occupations for Foreigners (Article 8)

Certain professions are prohibited for foreigners, notably:

- Tourist guiding.
- Export and customs clearance (except Palestinians).

8. Maximum Foreign Employment Ratio (Article 9)

Foreign employees may not exceed 10% of the total Egyptian workforce in any establishment, with specified exceptions for free zones, small enterprises, and approved cases by the exceptions committee.

9. Exceptions Committee (Articles 10 to 17)

A committee is established to consider exemption requests from the foreign employment ratio, outlining its composition, duties, and decision-making procedures. Recommendations require approval by the competent authority.

10. Permit Duration and Fees (Article 18)

The permit duration is one year or less, with graduated fees starting at EGP 6,000 and rising up to EGP 100,000, including special provisions for exemption cases.

11. Fee Exemptions (Article 19)

Certain nationalities are exempt from fees under the principle of reciprocity, including Sudanese, Palestinians, Lebanese, Greeks, and Tunisians.

12. Short-Term Employment (Article 20)

Short-term foreign employment up to 14 days is permitted subject to a special fee and prior written approval.

13. Renewal and Regularization (Articles 23 and 24)

Foreigners working without permits may regularize their status upon payment of a fee, with possible waivers. Permit renewal requests must be submitted at least two months before expiry.

14. Absence and License Cancellation (Articles 25 to 30)

Employer obligations regarding reporting foreign worker absences, procedures for license suspension or cancellation, and notifications to security authorities are regulated. Grounds for license cancellation include criminal convictions, submission of false data, and harm to national interests.

15. Data Management and Records (Articles 31 to 33)

Establishments must maintain detailed foreign workforce records, submit periodic reports to competent authorities, and contribute data to a centralized Ministry database.

16. Rights and Protections for Foreign Workers (Articles 34 to 38)

Foreign workers are subject to the Labor Law provisions and contracts. The decree emphasizes protection against discrimination and exploitation, prohibits passport retention, facilitates legal recourse, and mandates the establishment of a dedicated Ministry unit to assist foreign workers.

Conclusion

Ministerial Decree No. 279 of 2025 establishes a comprehensive legal and procedural framework regulating foreign employment in Egypt. It defines clear conditions for licensing, protects foreign workers' rights, and strengthens the regulatory framework governing the employment of foreign nationals across different sectors.