

Overland to Thailand – New regulation for foreign vehicle

1. Some contextual info

On 6th of July, a meeting with the Head of Division of International Land Transport Department in Bangkok and myself has been organized in order to discuss about various issues and consequences of this new law for overland travellers. This meeting was organized from their initiative.

In order to keep the story short, I was traveling along with other friends in Cambodia when the law was enforced on 27th June 2016. I decided to use all means in order to have the permit process boosted up, as very few times were given for me and my friends to start transiting Thailand as expected. Contact has been taken with the Department of Land Transportation Headquarter, the situation explained, and my embassy engaged (special thanks to the Swiss Embassy in Bangkok).

Given that the new regulation creates more problems than it solves, a Facebook group has been created to spread the message and collect the maximum information and inquiries from current and future travellers seeking to go in Thailand.

I flew from Siem Reap to Bangkok and attended the meeting raising all issues we bring together. The meeting was very pleasant, and the authorities showed a strong interest for us to help them enhance their new system and regulation. Yes... The DLT does not work tightly together with Customs and Immigration department. So they were doing their first experience on regulating foreigners wishing to drive their own vehicle car in Thailand.

Important to say : in the past, there was a big nationwide issue where Chinese travellers on their own vehicle were involved in a dramatic accident which did generate Thai casualties. The faultive drivers did escape and passed the border back to China, where they couldn't be facing justice. The new law is a response to these kind of acts. Too many foreigners do not take care for 3rd party insurance in case of such events, although the law does require it.

2. The new regulation for us overland travellers currently enforced

All information given here is the result of a series of question/answer I could raise during the meeting.

- All types of foreign vehicles are allowed to drive in Thailand : Motorcycle, cars, Camper van (< 3.5t), camper trucks (> 3.5t)
- An international Driving permit is mandatory
- A 3rd party vehicle insurance is mandatory. This should be organized from the travel agency. The insurance usually costs around 40-50 USD and lasts 1 year. Minimum 1'000'000 baht damage must be covered.
- A 3rd party person insurance is mandatory. This insurance is very common to have in our own country too
- There is currently no multiple entry. But the process is easier : For the first permit, you have to apply the usual way. Once your data is registered into their system, applying a second permit is straightforward and does not require doing the whole process again. This is the part you have to be sure the travel agency doesn't charge the same way as the first application. It is although important to inform at beginning the intended route and timeframe. The 3rd party insurance must cover both intended period.
- No guided tour is mandatory. You enter and you are free to go wherever you have stated in your

application process.

- There is no need of proof of purchase of the vehicle
- You can entry and exit at 2 different borders. You must state clearly on the permit application which border you enter and which you will exit.
- In case of overstay (health of vehicle issues), you have to inform the DLT accordingly. There are no consequences as far as they are informed about the situation.
- the 30 days application process can be lifted. You need to contact your agency AND DLT in order to explain our case. They do take your case seriously.

3. How to apply

The DLT gave me the reference of a tour agency whiling to process the permit. Although they were in the learning curve, they could apply the permit in the online system successfully. By the time of writing, the process is still being consolidated and needs some training for them.

Aran Sisophon Travel

Contact person: Mrs. Tip (+66) 0810013353

Facebook : Aran Sisophon Travel & Tours

The price shall be around 5000 baht for a set. That means for everything (insurance, application, and so on) for one vehicle.

Important : In order to help the process, especially if you are in a difficult situation (e.g. 30 days problem), contact directly the Headquarter of DLT through Email. I am unfortunately not allowed to give their direct phone number in here :

Headquarter of Department of Land Transportation in Bangkok
International Transport Affairs Group

international.dlt@gmail.com

Ask for Mrs. Sawita. State very clearly you are an overland traveller. They know the rest of the whole story from now on ;-)

4. What's next ?

For my surprise, they took very seriously certain suggestion I have done in order to make everyones life easier. They will be discussing with the higher authorities about making their system granting us a permit with a large period of validity and cumulated stay of 60 days. That means, no need to apply for two permits if needed to cross the country twice. Additionally, the fixed border restriction might be lifted. So lets cross fingers and hope for the best.

This document might be corrected if required. Please inform me of any additional stuff that has to be inserted/corrected here. Also, feel free to share.

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Cheers

Lawrence