

# Iqama Transfer Made Easy

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



**GLOBAL  
EXPANSION**



## Table of Contents

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<b>01</b>	Introduction .....	<b>P1</b>
<b>02</b>	What is Iqama? .....	<b>P2</b>
<b>03</b>	Different Types of Iqama .....	<b>P3</b>
<b>04</b>	What is Iqama Transfer? .....	<b>P4</b>
<b>05</b>	Types of Iqama Transfer .....	<b>P5</b>
<b>06</b>	How to Check Iqama Transfer Status?.....	<b>P6</b>
<b>07</b>	New Rules for Foreign Workers .....	<b>P7</b>
<b>08</b>	Conditions for Iqama Transfer Without Employer's Consent .....	<b>P8</b>
<b>09</b>	Cost of Iqama Transfer .....	<b>P9</b>
<b>10</b>	Required Documents for Iqama Transfer .....	<b>P9</b>
<b>11</b>	Reasons for Iqama Transfer Request Rejection .....	<b>P9</b>
<b>12</b>	Iqama Transfer Process Online Through Qiwa .....	<b>P10</b>
<b>13</b>	Simplify the Iqama Transfer Process .....	<b>P11</b>
<b>14</b>	Case Studies & Examples .....	<b>P12</b>
<b>15</b>	FAQs & References .....	<b>P13</b>

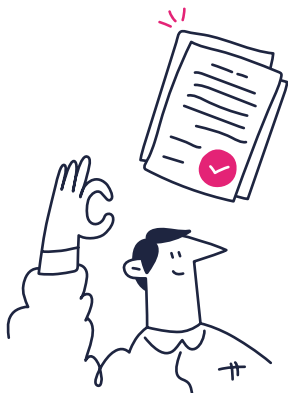
# 01

## INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia is a major hub for expatriates that has clear rules for employing foreign workers. These regulations are updated regularly to meet local laws and make job transitions smoother.

A key part of working in Saudi Arabia is understanding the Iqama system. An Iqama is an important document that serves as a work permit and a residency permit for expatriates. For those changing jobs, knowing the Iqama transfer process is essential for a smooth and legal transition.

This guide covers the details of Iqama transfer, including types, processes, costs, and recent regulatory changes, supported by official references and case studies.

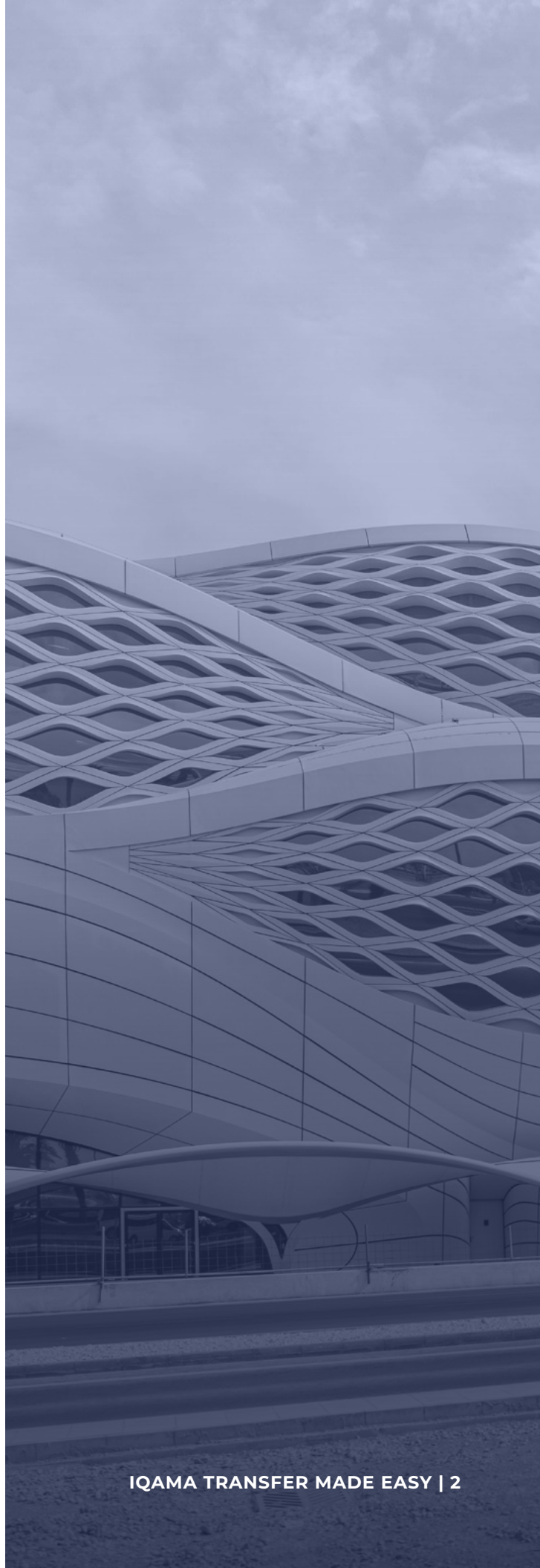


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## WHAT IS IQAMA?

An Iqama is an official ID and legal document from the Saudi government that acts as both a residence and work permit for expatriates. It is essential for any expatriate who wants to work and live in Saudi Arabia legally.

The Iqama ensures that the expatriate has a legitimate sponsor, usually the employer, who is responsible for their stay and work. The sponsor holds significant control over the expatriate's legal status in the country.



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## DIFFERENT TYPES OF IQAMA

The Saudi government issues various types of Iqamas based on the expatriate's purpose for staying in the Kingdom.

Here are the primary types:



### **Dependents Iqama:**

For family members of expatriates.



### **Professional Class Iqama:**

For employees with professional degrees.



### **Business Iqama:**

For businessmen, investors, and entrepreneurs expanding their businesses in the Kingdom.



### **Government Employees Iqama:**

For foreigners employed by the Saudi government.



### **Domestic Worker Iqama:**

For expatriates employed as household help.



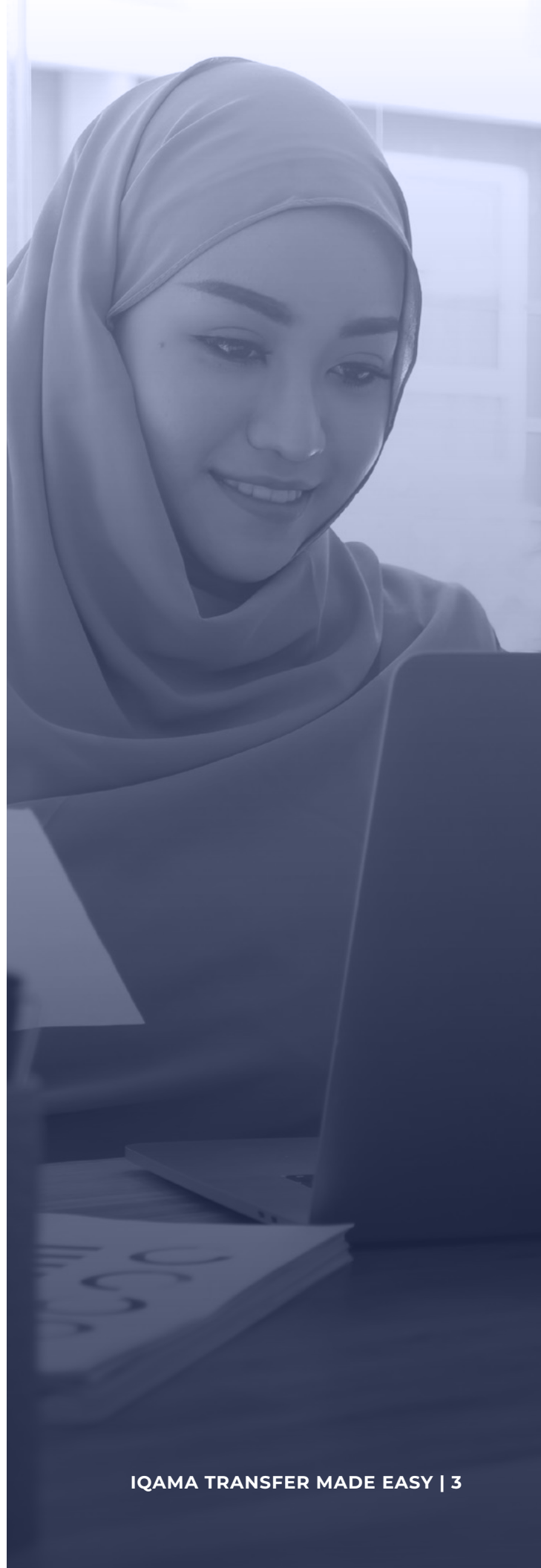
### **Labour Class Iqama:**

For manual job migrant workers.



### **Premium Residency Iqama /Special Privileged Iqama:**

For expatriates who wish to reside in Saudi Arabia while enjoying many rights and privileges akin to Saudi nationals.

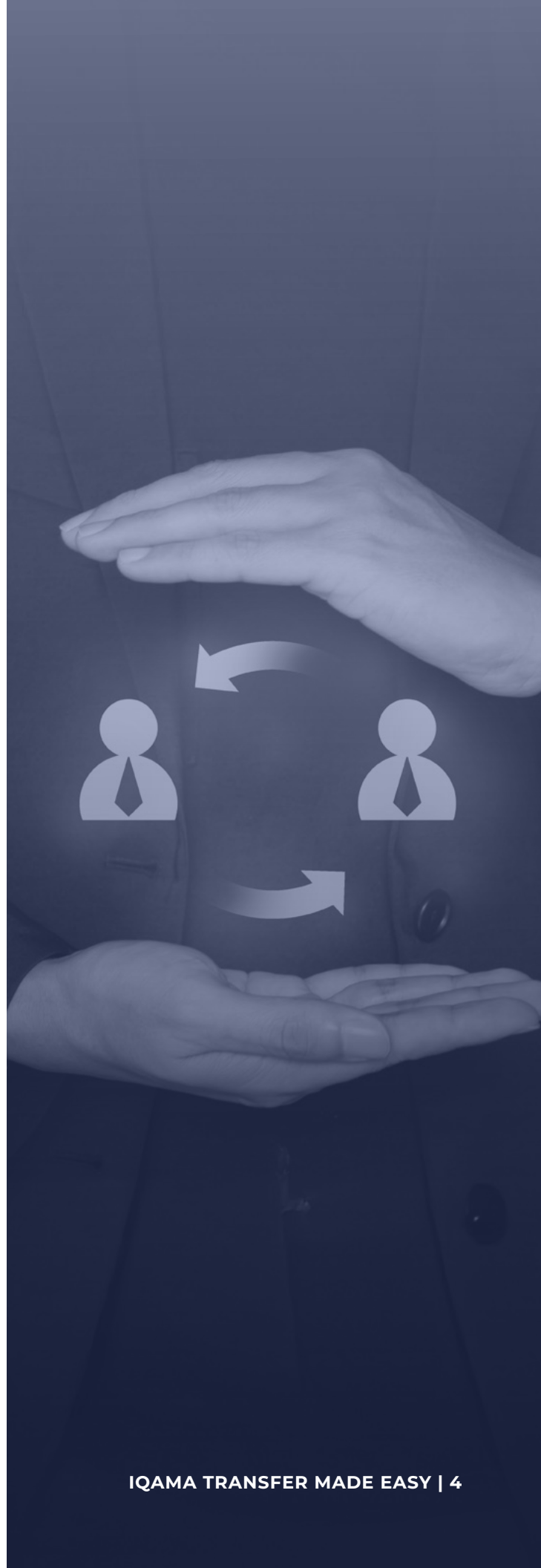


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## WHAT IS IQAMA TRANSFER?

Iqama transfer, or sponsorship transfer, happens when an expatriate changes jobs and needs a new sponsor. This process can be complex and depends on the current employer's policies and consent.

The transfer involves official fees and can take several weeks to months. Not all Iqamas can be transferred, and getting the current employer's approval is often necessary. Saudi Arabia has introduced new rules to make Iqama transfers more flexible.



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## TYPES OF IQAMA TRANSFER

Iqama transfers can be conducted multiple times during an employee's stay in Saudi Arabia via the Qiwa platform.

The main types are:

1

### Transfer Pending Employer's Approval:

Required if the employee has been in Saudi Arabia for less than a year.

2

### Direct Transfer:

Allowed without the current employer's approval under specific conditions, such as expired work permits or Iqamas.

3

### Transfer Pending Notice Period:

For employees who have worked in Saudi Arabia for more than a year, allowing transfer without current employer approval after a 90-day notice period.

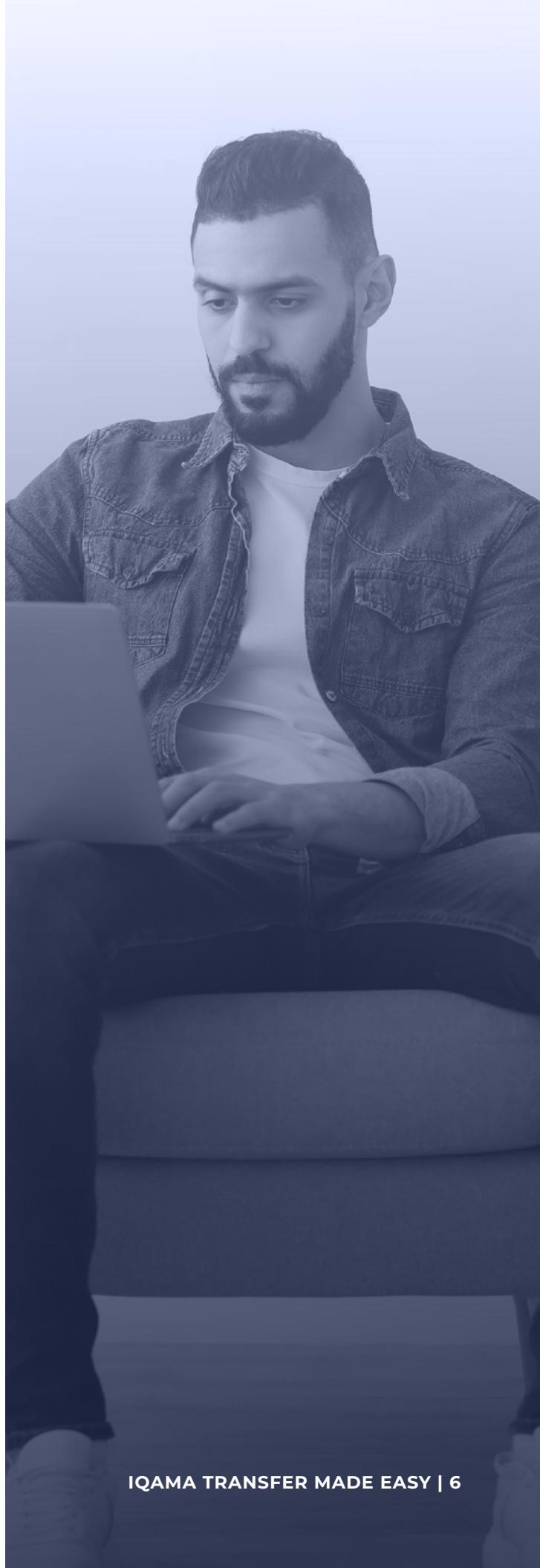


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## HOW TO CHECK IQAMA TRANSFER STATUS?

To check the status of your Iqama transfer:

- 1 Visit the official site of the [Ministry of Labour](#)
- 2 Select the fourth option from the menu (translated to Naqal Kafala).
- 3 Fill in your Iqama number and enter the image code.
- 4 Check for your sponsor's name, application number, and date of transfer.





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## NEW RULES FOR FOREIGN WORKERS

As of March 2021, foreign employees no longer need their employer's permission to transfer sponsorships, switch jobs, or leave the country.

This change aims to attract global talent by making employment laws more favorable to expatriates.

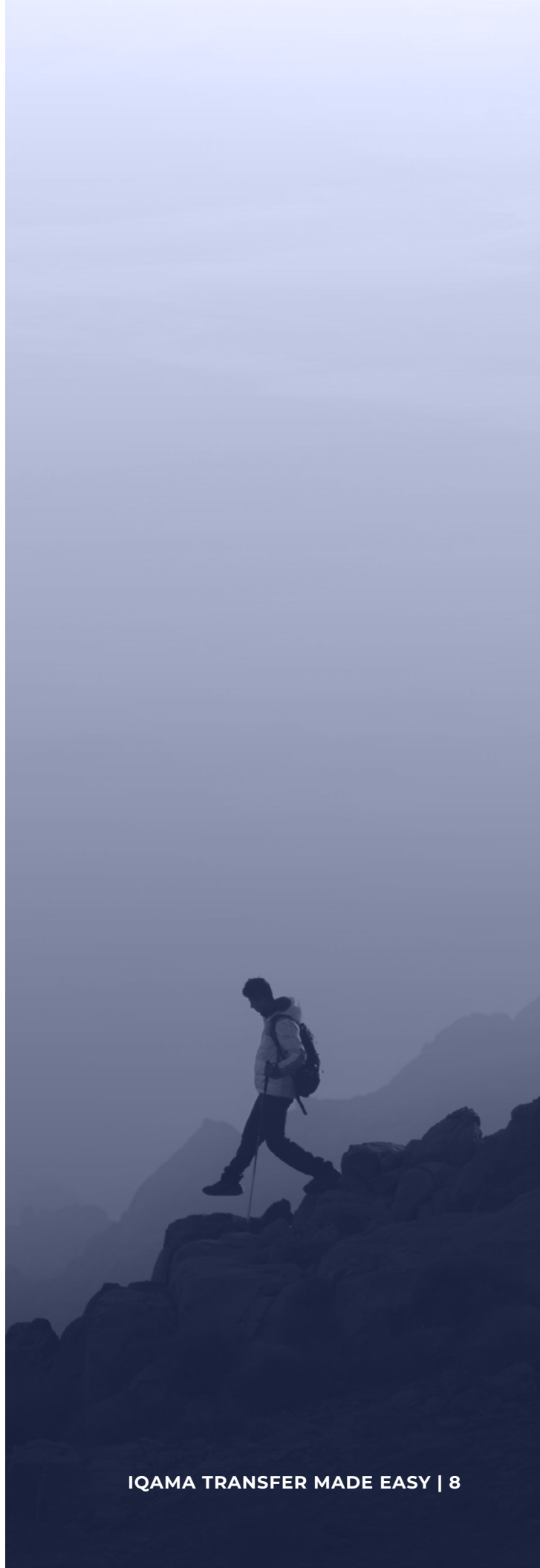


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## CONDITIONS FOR IQAMA TRANSFER WITHOUT EMPLOYER'S CONSENT

**Certain conditions allow employees to transfer their Iqama without employer consent:**

- ▶ The employee must comply with KSA laws and complete at least one year with their current employer.
- ▶ A well-documented work contract is required.
- ▶ The new employer must submit the employment offer through the Qiwa portal.
- ▶ Conditions such as expired work contracts, unpaid wages, or employer's extended absence can also justify a transfer without consent.



## **09** COST OF IQAMA TRANSFER

**Fees vary depending on the worker's category and the number of transfers:**

- ▶ Domestic workers: 600 SR for the first transfer, 350 SR for renewal.
- ▶ Workers over 18: Muqem insurance and renewal fees totaling 500 SR.
- ▶ New employers: Must pay 2000 SR for the initial transfer and an additional 2000 SR for subsequent transfers.

## **10** REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR IQAMA TRANSFER

**Necessary documents include:**

- ▶ Iqama
- ▶ Passport copy
- ▶ Court ruling (if applicable)
- ▶ Request letter from new sponsor (attested by the Chamber of Commerce)

## **11** REASONS FOR IQAMA TRANSFER REQUEST REJECTION

**Transfer requests may be rejected due to:**

- ▶ Expired passport
- ▶ Final exit or re-entry stamp
- ▶ Criminal record
- ▶ Traffic violations
- ▶ Runaway status

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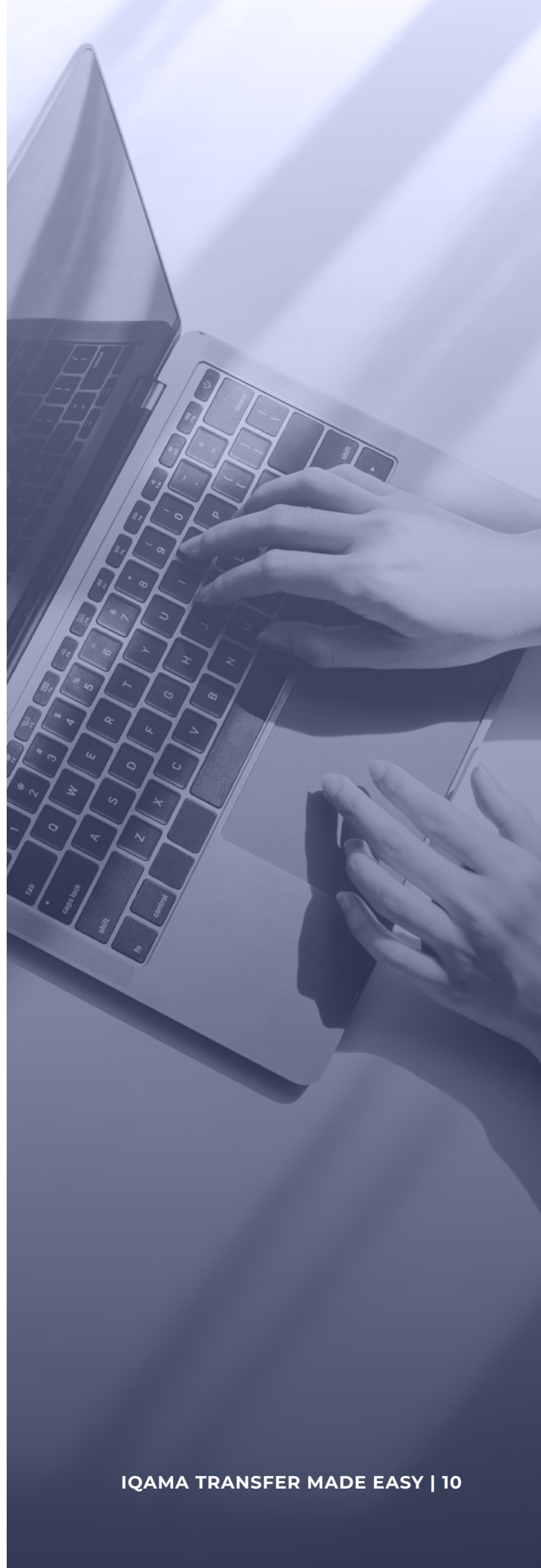
## IQAMA TRANSFER PROCESS ONLINE THROUGH QIWA

### Auto-Transfer Process:

- 1 Request from New Sponsor:**  
Initiated through Qiwa.
- 2 Approval from the Labour Ministry:**  
Generally approved within 24 hours.
- 3 Check Application Status:**  
Via the MOL website.
- 4 Pay Transfer Fee:**  
Ranges from 2000 SR to 6000 SR.
- 5 Absher Check:**  
Monitor the application status.
- 6 Visit Jawazat:** Print the new Iqama at a Passport Office center.

### Court Approval Process:

- 1 New Employer's Visit:**  
Submit necessary documents to the labor office.
- 2 Review by Maktab Amal:**  
Verification and system update.
- 3 Check Application Status:**  
Via the MOL website.
- 4 Pay Transfer Fee:**  
As per the auto-transfer process.
- 5 Absher Check:**  
Confirm status and print Iqama.



# 13

## SIMPLIFY THE IQAMA TRANSFER PROCESS

Managing the Iqama transfer process in Saudi Arabia can be complex and time-consuming. However, knowing the rules and procedures can make changing jobs much easier.

Recent reforms in Saudi Arabia aim to make employment laws better for expatriates, showing the Kingdom's effort to attract global talent and create a flexible job market.

Whether you're an employee looking for a new job or an employer hiring international talent, staying updated on the latest regulations and using platforms like Qiwa can help ensure a smooth and efficient transfer process.

For more detailed information and updates, visit the [Ministry of Labour](#) and [Absher](#) websites.



# 14

## CASE STUDIES & EXAMPLES

To provide a clearer understanding, here are a few real-world examples and case studies:

### CASE STUDY

#### Ahmed's Successful Iqama Transfer

Ahmed, an IT professional, successfully transferred his Iqama to a new employer without his previous employer's consent due to unpaid wages. The new employer submitted an offer through the Qiwa portal, and Ahmed's transfer was completed within three weeks.



### EXAMPLE

#### Sarah's Dependent Iqama Transfer

Sarah, a teacher, needed to transfer her Iqama to her husband after their marriage. With all the necessary documents and approvals from her current employer, the transfer process was straightforward and completed in a month.



By understanding these processes and using the provided resources, expatriates and employers can manage the complexities of Iqama transfers more effectively.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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### **How long is the Iqama transfer request valid?**

The Iqama transfer request is valid for 90 days. Employees should complete the process within this time frame to avoid further complications.

### **How can I transfer my Iqama from my company to my husband?**

To transfer your Iqama from your company to your husband, you need to get approval from your current employer, submit the required documents to the Ministry of Labor, and receive approval for your husband's sponsorship.

### **What happens if Iqama expires?**

If your Iqama expires, you may face fines and legal issues. It is crucial to renew it on time to avoid future problems.

### **Are Iqama Transfer and Sponsorship Transfer the Same?**

Yes, Iqama transfer and sponsorship transfer refer to the same process of changing the sponsorship from one employer to another.

## Reference Websites

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- ▶ [Ministry of Labour](#)
- ▶ [Absher](#)
- ▶ [Qiwa Platform](#)



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