

The Ultimate Guide to Iqama Sponsorship for Employers in Saudi Arabia

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding Iqama sponsorship in Saudi Arabia can be challenging for employers, but it's essential for seamless and compliant hiring.

This guide simplifies each stage, identifies potential challenges, and provides practical tips to help you manage Iqama sponsorship effectively. Whether you're new or want to improve your current process, this guide will help you.



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UNDERSTANDING IQAMA

An Iqama is a residence permit and a work authorization, essential for any foreign national wishing to live and work legally in Saudi Arabia. There are various types of Iqama, each for different employment and residency scenarios:



Work Permits: Common for foreign workers, with the Labor Class Iqama for skilled trades and the Professional Class Iqama for university-educated professionals.



Dependents Iqama: Allows family members of Iqama holders to reside in Saudi Arabia, with sponsorship requirements varying based on the primary worker's Iqama category.



Domestic Worker Iqama: For household employees, offering some benefits but not family sponsorship.



Government Employee Iqama: Issued to foreign nationals working directly for the Saudi government, allowing access to specific services and family sponsorship.



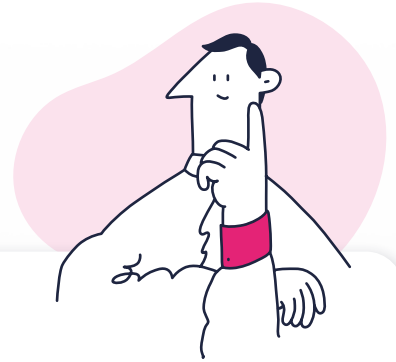
Business Iqama: For individuals establishing businesses in Saudi Arabia, involving additional steps like registering with the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA).



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THE IQAMA SPONSORSHIP PROCESS FOR EMPLOYERS

Think of Iqama sponsorship as a three-stage journey: pre-employment, during employment, and post-employment.



Pre-employment: Launching the Iqama Process

- 1 Job Offer & Contract:** A formal job offer and a detailed employment contract in Arabic and English are required, outlining salary, benefits, and job description as per the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) guidelines.
- 2 Matching Job & Iqama Type:** Selecting the appropriate Iqama category based on the job type is crucial.
- 3 Ministry Approval & Visa Application:** Secure approval from the Ministry of Labor by submitting the employment contract and other necessary documents. Once approved, your foreign hire can apply for a work visa at the Saudi embassy or consulate in their home country.

During Employment: Maintaining Iqama Validity

- 1 Iqama Issuance & Medical Test:** Upon arrival, your employee undergoes a medical examination and collects their Iqama, which typically has a one-year validity.
- 2 Iqama Renewal:** Ensure timely renewals to avoid complications. Iqamas generally require renewal before they expire.
- 3 Employer Responsibilities:** Ongoing responsibilities include making GOSI (social insurance) contributions and facilitating any necessary Iqama changes during employment (e.g., change of profession).

Post-employment: Concluding the Iqama Journey

- 1 Iqama Cancellation:** Upon employment termination, notify the relevant authorities and settle all outstanding dues to cancel the Iqama.
- 2 Transferring Sponsorship:** If the employee finds a new job, you can initiate an Iqama transfer process to the new sponsor with the employee's consent, ensuring a smooth handover of responsibilities.

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HOW TO CHECK YOUR EMPLOYEE'S IQAMA STATUS

Online Method:

Use the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development's website ([MHRSD Portal](#)). Enter the required information (Iqama number and date of birth in the Hijri calendar) and complete the captcha to view Iqama details.

SMS Option:

Send a specific code with the Iqama number and sponsor ID to the corresponding mobile service provider number. The response will likely be in Arabic.

Offline Verification:

Visit the nearest Jawazat (Passport Office) with the employee's passport and Iqama number for verification.



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AN EFFECTIVE IQAMA MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Understanding and managing Iqama sponsorship is crucial for employers in Saudi Arabia. By learning the stages, following regulations, and partnering with a reliable EOR, you can handle this process more effectively.

For more detailed information and updates, visit the official websites of the [Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development](#) and the [Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority](#).

Managing the Iqama sponsorship process can be challenging, but with the right knowledge and resources, you can ensure a streamlined and compliant experience for you and your employees.

References:

- ➔ [Ministry of Human Resources & Social Development \(MHRSD\)](#)
- ➔ [Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority \(SAGIA\)](#)



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