

Divorcees can get 1-yr visa extension



LEGAL VIEW ASHISH MEHTA

Q: I am a Muslim expat living in Dubai with my husband and two children. I am a homemaker. My husband and I intend to get divorced as things have not been working out between us. This will be a mutual decision. Once we are divorced, is there a legal provision for me to stay in the UAE under his sponsorship so that my children may continue to stay with me as they are going to a school here?

A: It should be noted that, recently, the government of the UAE proposed a one-year residence visa extension for divorced women and widows. This one-year period shall start from the date of the divorce or the date of death of the husband. On the date of filing for divorce or at the time of death of the husband, the wife and the children should be on the sponsorship of

the husband. Since you and your children intend to stay under the sponsorship of your husband upon divorce, you may remain in such residence status for one year from the date of the divorce. However, your children may continue to be sponsored by your husband as a father, and this period of one year is not applicable to them.

Along with your application to continue to remain on the sponsorship of your husband, you should present your divorce certificate and other relevant documents to the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA). For further clarifications, you may contact the GDRFA and seek their advice.

Fines are imposed on those who overstay their visas

Q: My employer gave me a termination notice on the last day of my residence visa's validity, giving me only the grace period of 30 days. I couldn't find the job within this period but I would like to stay longer to continue looking for a job. Now, my concern is about the consequences of an extended stay. How will it affect my rental and Sewa contract? How much

would the overstay fines be and what are the conditions that have to be considered if I decide to exit the country and come back on a visit visa?

A: It is understood that your employer served you with a notice to terminate your employment on the last day of validity of your UAE residence visa, and you were not able to find a new employment within the 30-day grace period.

You have not mentioned whether your employment contract has expired or not. The residence visa to stay in the UAE and the employment contract are two separate issues, even though they are connected to each other. We assume that your employment contract has expired prior to the expiry of your residence visa. There is no requirement for an employer or an employee to serve a termination notice if the employment contract is to expire. However, it would be a good practice to inform the other if they don't intend to renew the employment contract.

Even though your residence visa has expired, your rental contract may remain active if it is within the validity period and you should pay the rent on time. Further, the bills of Sewa (Sharjah

Know the law



Even though a UAE resident's visa has expired, his or her rental contract may remain active and utility bills will continue to be generated. He or she will still have to pay on time

Electricity and Water Authority) will continue to be generated until you get it cancelled. You may cancel your residence visa through your employer and exit the country. You may re-enter the UAE on a visit visa or employment visa once your current visa is cancelled. Should you overstay in the country, you shall have to bear a fine that is generally Dh125 for the first day and Dh25 for each day thereafter. You may approach the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs for further advice.

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Know the law

Divorced women and widows may stay under the sponsorship of their husband for one year, from the date of the divorce or the death of the spouse