

Mobility (also known as local transfer)

In order for an employee to locally change employers and obtain a work visa under a different employer, that new employer must apply for the employee's "mobility" through LMRA's system, the following instructions should be followed:

To apply for mobility the expat employee's work visa must be valid for at least 3 months.

1. Mobility Scenarios and Steps:

A. Mobility with the approval of the current employer:

- i. In case of agreement with the current employer, the new employer applying for the mobility of the expat employee, does not need to have a "no objection letter" signed by the authorized person / CR owner of the CR where the expat is currently working, this is now done electronically from the "allow mobility" function.
- ii. After submitting the mobility application by the new employer, the current (old) employer needs logon to the EMS system and electronically approve the mobility / transfer application online, this way the expat can be mobilized to the new employer without delays. After that approval, the new employer will need pay the fees in order to action the transfer application.

B. Mobility without the consent of the current employer:

- i. In this case the expat employee needs to give his/her resignation and their notice to their current employer (as per the labour law and the employment contract between them). The employee must send these documents by registered mail through the post office on the registered physical address of the employer (as per the CR); letters sent to PO boxes will not be accepted. In order to obtain the correct address (if not already known to the employee), employees can do an online CR inquiry on the ministry of commerce's web site. To check, use the employer's CR number without the branch number, for example: if your employer's CR is 12302 or 123-02, it means that the CR number is 123 – branch 2, use the number 123 in your query, then select the relevant branch (number 2) from the next list to view the registration and address details.
- ii. After posting the resignation to the employer, the employee needs to retain the post receipt and give a copy of it to the new employer applying for his mobility.
- iii. The employee also needs to look at his/her employment contract with the current (old) employer and if there is a certain page or paragraph citing the notice period, a copy of this page needs to be given to the new employer. (LMRA would follow the notice period as per the employment contract – if that notice is for any period of time that is up to 3 months, any contract containing any notice period for more than 3 months, will be automatically set to 3 months.)
- iv. The expat can only be mobilized after completing his / her notice period with the current employer.

2. Intention for Mobility:

- Expats who want to join another employer after the termination or expiry of their current visa must first register their intention for mobility at least 30 days before the expiry date of their current work visa. (i.e. anytime during the first 23 months of their work visa.)

- The intention can only be registered through the digital fingerprint of the expat, and the presentation his/her original CPR card or a valid ID - it cannot be registered without the presence of the expat (Currently the intention can be registered at customer services – LMRA's main office on the ground floor (normal working hours from Sundays to Thursdays)
- Once the intention has been registered, the current employer will not be able to renew the visa of that expat anymore (unless the expat comes back and requests to cancel his/her previously registered intention.)

A. Expats with cancelled visas:

If the current / old employer had cancelled the expat employee's visa, it is to be noted that the expat is usually given 30 days extension of stay after cancellation from the General Directorate for Nationality, Passports and Residency – (GDNPR),

- i. If the expat employee had already registered his/her mobility intention, then the new employer can apply for a new work visa as soon as possible after the cancellation of the old visa and while the extension of stay for that expat is still valid (for at least 7 days)
- ii. If the expat did not yet register his / her mobility intention, then he / she needs to register it within 5 days of his / her knowledge of the cancellation of the visa. (It is to be noted that the expat employee's signature is mandatory on the visa cancellation form that the employer submits, when requesting the visa cancellation) - the new employer will need to apply for a new work visa as soon as possible after the intention is registered and while the extension of stay for that expat is still valid (for at least 7 days)

B. Expats with expired visas:

- i. If the expat employee had already registered the mobility intention, then the new employer can apply for a new work visa as soon as the old visa expires. (The new visa must be applied for, paid for, approved and printed within 30 days of the old visa's expiry.)
- ii. If the expat did not register his / her mobility intention, he /she cannot obtain a new work visa while in Bahrain, he /she must leave the country, before any new employer can apply for a new work visa for the same expat. Expats who overstay for more than 30 days after the cancellation / termination, or expiry of their old visa cannot get a new work visa without leaving the country, they must leave first, in order for the new employer to be able to apply for their new work visa.

3. Required documents for Mobility (from New employers)

From Branch to Branch:

- Expat's Passport copy (as well as dependents' passport copies - if any)

From CR to CR:

- Expat's Passport copy
- Dependents passport copies (if any)

And, if the old (current) sponsor is not electronically approving the mobility (scenario 1.B above) – new employer needs to submit:

- Expat's Passport copy.
- Dependents passport copies (if any).
- Copy of the resignation / notice letter sent by the expat to the old employer and the Registered mail postal receipt.
- Copy of the employment contract's notice page (if available)