

Deadline for ID card registration extended

Emiratis and expats get extension, while registration for expats will soon be done along with visa renewal

- By Binsal Abdul Kader, Staff Reporter
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Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Identity Authority (Eida) has extended the deadline for the ID registration for Emiratis and expatriates.

Emiratis who have not yet registered will have until June 30, 2011 to register, Eida said in a press release on Saturday.

Eida's board of directors decided not to insist on the December 31 deadline for expatriates to register for ID cards, a top official told *Gulf News*.

"Eida will soon link ID card registration of expatriates with the issuance and renewal of their residence visas to enrol all expatriates in the country," said Dr. Ali Al Khoury, Director General of Eida.

The announcement came after it was reported that chaos ensued at certified typing centres across the country as thousands of expatriates rushed to complete the pre-registration process before the December 31 deadline.

Many of them risked identity theft by leaving their passports with the typing centres and top immigration and Eida officials warned against such practice.

As *Gulf News* reported earlier, the ID card registration had been linked with visa issuance and renewal in Umm Al Quwain as part of Eida's 2010-2013 strategy to enrol all expatriates in the country by the end of 2013.

"Although that system will be extended to all emirates, people cannot wait for that because those who have not an ID card will be denied many services from both government and private sector," Al Khoury said.

He cited the example of traffic department services such as driving license and vehicle registration which need an ID card in Abu Dhabi and four northern emirates.

Although Dubai and Sharjah have not made ID card mandatory for traffic department services, such a decision may be announced anytime soon, the official said.

Many government and semi government entities have already decided to make ID card mandatory to access their services.

Eda will work with private sector also to make ID card mandatory for accessing their services, Al Khoury said.

Although the deadline has been extended, whoever wants to access the government services should not be complacent about ID card registration and should come forward to register, he explained.

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