

# ID card to be made mandatory for a string of services

Labourers can register when renewing visas, but professionals have to hurry

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Abu Dhabi: The extension of the deadline for national ID card registration does not offer much of a reprieve to expatriate businessmen and professionals as the card will be mandatory for them to access government services soon, a top official told *Gulf News*.

The Emirates Identity Authority (Eida) plans to link the ID card registration to the issuance and renewal of residence visas, but expatriate professionals should not wait until their visas expire, Dr Ali Al Khoury, Director-General of Eida, said.

"It will be a gradual process to be implemented in all emirates by the end of 2011," he added.

Unlike labourers, professionals have to perform many transactions with the government and without an ID card, they will not be able to access many services, Al Khoury said. "So they should not delay the registration," he said.

"But labourers [blue-collar workers and household workers who constitute the majority of expatriates] can wait until the renewal of their visas."

## **New date**

Eida has extended the December 31 deadline for both Emiratis and expatriates. Emiratis who have not yet registered will have until June 30, 2011 to register, according to a press release issued by Eida yesterday.

Al Khoury revealed that about 125,000 Emiratis, mostly newborns and children, have not yet registered.

Although Eida did not specify the next deadline for expatriates, the announcement mentioned that Eida was keen to complete the registration of all legal residents based on the new Eida Strategy 2010-13.

The deadline extension has dispelled rumours and confusion about fines or other penal action against non-registered expatriates.

Thousands of expatriates had caused chaos at certified typing centres in the past two weeks in an attempt to complete the pre-registration process before the December 31 deadline.

It is understood that Eida plans to stick to the new strategy announced last year which envisaged enrolling all residents by the end of 2013.

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