

# New rule marks end of no-objection certificates

Workers who complete at least two years of contract period will not need former employer's consent to switch jobs.

- By Samir Salama, Associate Editor
- Published: 00:00 December 20, 2010



Abu Dhabi: Beginning January 1, 2011, foreign workers switching jobs will not need a no-objection certificate from former employers as the Ministry of Labour will make the decision, a senior official said on Sunday.

Humaid Bin Deemas, Acting Director-General at the Ministry of Labour, told *Gulf News* that once a labour contract ends or is terminated legally, the Labour Ministry will have the authority to allow workers to take up new jobs without the consent of former employers or the no-objection certificate.

"Workers, skilled and unskilled, who end their job contracts legally and complete at least two years of service, will get a labour permit outright," he said.

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Previously, workers had to complete at least three years of service with the previous employers and had to obtain a no-objection letter to avoid a ban.

Professional and skilled workers in three categories will also be exempt from the six-month ban, according to Bin Deemas.

### **Categories**

He estimated that these three categories (the first category covers skilled workers with university or post-graduate degrees, the second those with less than university degrees and the third category covers those with high school degrees) comprise 800,000 workers.

In the case of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, a company failing to honour its legal or contractual obligations will lose the right to stop them from getting other jobs. This includes not paying salaries for 60 days and not providing proper accommodation.

Workers can also take up new jobs if the employer stops the business for economic or technical reasons and these workers report the closure to the Labour Ministry within 60 days.

Bin Deemas said "it is not the employer's right to approve or disapprove switching of jobs. It is his right that workers complete the job contract in the event of contracts with limited period."

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