

The Emirates ID Card: 3 Important Facts

The Emirates ID Card is a proof of identity issued by the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs & Port Security ("ICP") to all citizens of the United Arab Emirates ("UAE") and every foreign resident in the UAE. It is issued physically in the size of a credit card as well as in electronic form. The Emirates ID Card is essential for a variety of governmental and personal matters. Below, we explain 3 important facts about the Emirates ID Card.

Fact 1

Personal Data kept on the Emirates ID Card

In addition to the cardholder's passport photo, the Emirates ID Card contains the cardholder's key personal data in both Arabic and English. This includes, among other details, the name, date of birth, nationality, gender, signature, job title, employer and Emirates ID number. The Emirates ID Card is equipped with an electronically readable chip that, apart from the aforementioned information, contains further personal data, such as fingerprints and marital status.

The 15-digit Emirates ID number is assigned upon the initial application for an Emirates ID Card and remains unchanged thereafter, irrespective of any changes to personal data or the cancellation and subsequent reapplication of an Emirates ID Card.

The data kept on the Emirates ID Card must always be up to date. Any changes have to be reported to the ICP within one month. Failure to do so may result in the imposition of fines.

The validity of an Emirates ID Card varies. For UAE citizens, it ranges between 5 and 10 years and for nationals of other member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council between 1 and 5 years. For residents, the validity is linked to the duration of the residence visa, which may range from 1 to 10 years.

Fact 2

Duty to Carry the Emirates ID Card

By law, every holder of an Emirates ID Card is obliged to carry it along at all times when being in the UAE to be able to identify oneself.

If the Emirates ID Card is damaged, stolen or lost, a new card must be applied for immediately with the ICP.

Fact 3

Usage of the Emirates ID Card

Also from a practical perspective, the Emirates ID Card is often required, such as to access medical services, to conclude a mobile phone contract, to download government applications like the UAE Pass app or to register a vehicle. Further examples of the relevance of the Emirates ID Card are as follows:

a. Applying for a Local Driving License

Unlike tourists, residents are not permitted to use a foreign driving license in the UAE. Instead, a local driving license has to be obtained.

The issuance of a local driving license requires an eye test, the presentation of the foreign driving license and, depending on the country of issuance of the license, the passing of a theoretical and practical examination. Additionally, a valid Emirates ID Card must be available. This means that during the period between the issuance of the residence visa and the receipt of the Emirates ID Card, a resident is not authorised to drive a vehicle.

b. Opening a Current Account

Local banks usually require the presentation of a valid Emirates ID Card as a requirement for opening a current account, whether for private or business purposes. Alternatively, some banks offer so-called non-resident accounts, for which the necessity of an Emirates ID Card does not apply.

c. Obtaining an Ejari Certificate

Anyone who concludes a long-term tenancy contract in the Emirate of Dubai must subsequently apply for a so-called Ejari Certificate. This document is, among other things, a requirement for registering electricity and water connections in one's own name. A valid Emirates ID Card is required both for the application of the Ejari Certificate and for the application of utility services.



Do you have questions? – We would be glad to answer them!

From our office located in the heart of Dubai, our team of German attorneys has been advising small and medium-sized companies, corporations and individuals on the laws of the United Arab Emirates for more than 20 years. Our areas of expertise include corporate law (in particular business set-up), commercial agency law, employment law as well as tenancy and real estate law. We would be happy to attend to your questions as well. Contact us!

ANDERS LEGAL CONSULTANCY LLC
Sama Tower, Office 806
Sheikh Zayed Road
PO Box 333 558, Dubai, VAE

Phone: +971 4 327 5888
Fax: +971 4 327 5999
eMail: info@anders.ae
Web: www.anders.ae

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