

# National Ambulance

## PRE-EMPLOYMENT HANDBOOK: INTRODUCTION TO UAE FOR EXPATRIATES

Disclaimer: The content of this document is for guidance only and has no legally binding content.

### Welcome to UAE

مرحبا بكم في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة



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## Introduction

Marhaba! Welcome to the National Ambulance (NA) in UAE . As an employee you are an integral part of providing health services to our clients. Your time and commitment to NA plays a key role in achieving The Company's mission and objectives.

The Pre-employment Handbook is designed to assist new employees prepare for moving to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and to give an overview of what to expect on arrival and while working for NA.

## United Arab Emirates

### Geography

The UAE is located in the Middle East, on the Persian Gulf between Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The geographical region of the UAE is around 80,000 square kilometres stretching from the Indian



Ocean  
in the  
east  
to the  
Empty

Quarter in the west, and from the mountains of the Sultanate of Oman in the south, to the Persian Gulf in the north. The country is made up of seven different emirates – Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm Al Quwain, with Abu Dhabi being by far the largest emirate, occupying over 80% of the country.

The UAE has a population of approximately 9 million people with more than 80% of the population made up of expatriates from many different countries. Indians are the majority at around 50% along with other South Asians, Filipinos, other Arabs and Iranians.

### History

A relatively short time ago, the emirate of Abu Dhabi was little more than empty desert inhabited by nomadic Bedouin tribes, with a sprinkling of villages around the more fertile oasis areas. Abu Dhabi city spread from the northern side of the island, originally consisting of two or three hundred palm

('barasti') huts, a few coral buildings and the Ruler's Fort. It is hard to reconcile the modern emirate of Abu Dhabi, and its high-rise capital city, with the scattered huts in the photos from the 1950s.

Despite the opportunities for fishing and grazing, it was not until the discovery of freshwater, in 1793, that the ruling Al Nahyan family, based in the south of the country at the Liwa Oasis, moved to the island. In Liwa, on the edge of the stark Empty Quarter, the Al Nahyan family lived a traditional Bedouin life, with animal husbandry and small-scale agriculture for their livelihood. Descendants of the Al Nahyan family, in alliance with other important Bedouin tribes in the region, have ruled the emirate of Abu Dhabi ever since.

By the 1800s, the town had developed considerably, supported by the income from pearling, which brought in important trade and revenue. From 1855 to 1909, under the reign of Sheikh Zayed bin Mohammed (also known as 'Zayed the Great'), Abu Dhabi rose in prominence to become the most powerful emirate along the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula. His influence was profound, and it was during his rule, in 1897, that Abu Dhabi and the emirates to the north accepted the protection of Britain.

In 1939, Sheikh Shakhbut bin Sultan granted concessions to a British company to search for oil, but the huge offshore reserves were not discovered until 1958, by an Anglo-French consortium. Exports began four years later, launching Abu Dhabi on its way to incredible wealth. Sheikh Shakhbut's rule, however, was considered rather idiosyncratic and in 1966 the British exerted their influence, assisting in him being replaced by his brother Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the then governor of the oasis town of Al Ain.

The British announced their withdrawal from the region two years later and encouraged the separate states to consider uniting under one flag. The ruling sheikhs, in particular Sheikh Zayed and the ruler of Dubai, realised that by joining forces they would have a stronger voice in both the wider Middle East region and globally. When negotiations began, the aim was to create a single state consisting of Bahrain, Qatar and the Trucial States, but the process collapsed when Bahrain and Qatar chose to go it alone. The Trucial States remained committed to forming an alliance and, in 1971, the federation of the United Arab Emirates was created.

The new state comprised the emirates of Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Sharjah, Umm Al Quwain, and in 1972, Ras Al Khaimah. The creation of the country hasn't been without its problems, primarily due to boundary disputes between the different emirates. At the end of Sheikh Zayed's first term as president, in 1976, he threatened to resign if the other rulers didn't settle the demarcation of their borders. The threat was an effective way of ensuring co-operation but, although more focus is now given to the importance of the federation as a whole, the degree of independence of the various emirates has, to date, not been fully determined. It is, however, led by Abu Dhabi whose wealth and sheer size make it the most powerful of all the emirates.

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Sheikh Zayed's son, was elected as president by the Supreme Council after his father's death. Sheikh Khalifa has promised to preserve his father's legacy, focusing on ensuring the continued growth of the UAE in order to meet the needs of its people. Apart from being an oil expert and head of the Supreme Petroleum Council, Sheikh Khalifa is renowned for his love of traditional sports, and his efforts in preserving them in today's modern times.

### Climate

The climate in the UAE is a sub-tropical, arid climate with blue skies and sunshine most days of the year. There is a wet season when rain is possible. This lasts from mid-November to mid-March.

However, rain is extremely infrequent and averages 12 cm per year.

In July and August, the average temperature is 39 but the temperature can reach +50 C° which, when combined with humidity of around 80%, makes conditions especially unpleasant. Night-time temperatures fall to around +28 C°. Winter temperatures fall to daily highs of +25 C° and night-time lows of +12 C°, cool enough to need a sweater or jacket. In the desert and in Al Ain, the highs are higher, and the lows are lower!

### Culture

Abu Dhabi's culture is firmly rooted in the Islamic traditions of Arabia. Islam is more than just a religion; it is a way of life that governs everyday events, from what to wear to what to eat and drink. The culture and heritage of the UAE is inextricably linked to its religion. The country's culture is tolerant and welcoming. Foreigners are free to practise their own religion, and women are able to drive and walk around unescorted. Among the most highly prized virtues are courtesy and hospitality, and visitors are sure to be charmed by the genuine friendliness of the people.

### Currency

UAE currency is in dirham (AED or DHS) and is divided into 100 fils. The dirham paper notes are available in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1,000. Coins are issued in fils (5, 10, 25 and 50) and 1 dirham. The dirham is pegged to the USD.

### Electrical Supply for Appliances

220-240 Volts, and 50 cycles.

### Languages spoken

Arabic is the official national language, although English, Hindi, Malayalam and Urdu are widely spoken. Arabic is the official business language, but English is widely used and most road signs, shop signs and restaurant menus are in both languages. The further out of town you go, the more Arabic you will find, both written and spoken, on street and shop signs.

Arabic isn't the easiest language to pick up, or to pronounce, but if you can throw in a couple of words of Arabic here and there, they will usually be warmly received, at least with a smile. Most people will help you out with your pronunciation – they're happy you're putting in the effort, so it certainly won't hurt to try, and it definitely helps when dealing with officials of any sort.

### Religion

The UAE, where most Nationals are Sunni Muslims, is a country tolerant of other religions and you can find Christian churches, Hindi temples and other places of worship as well as the many beautiful mosques. Muslims pray anywhere during prayer time so don't be surprised to see people praying outside or in shops. There are five prayer times each day, based on the cycles of the sun, and mosques make a public call to Muslims at prayer-time with the first of the day at pre-dawn.

### Ramadan

Ramadan is the holy month in which Muslims commemorate the revelation of the Holy Quran (the holy book of Islam). It's a time of fasting and Muslims abstain from all food, drinks, cigarettes and unclean thoughts between dawn and dusk. In the evening, the fast is broken with the Iftar feast. Iftar timings are found in all the daily newspapers.

All over the city, festive Ramadan tents are filled to the brim each evening with people of all nationalities and religions enjoying shisha, traditional Arabic mezze and sweets. In addition to the

standard favourite shisha cafes and restaurants around town, the five-star hotels erect special Ramadan tents for the month. The timing of Ramadan is not fixed in terms of the western calendar, but each year it occurs around 11 days earlier than the previous year, with the start date depending on the sighting of the moon.

Non-Muslims are also recommended to refrain from eating, drinking or smoking in public places during daylight hours as a sign of respect. Failure to do so could upset people or lead to an official complaint.

During Ramadan, the sale of alcohol in most outlets is restricted to after dusk, and office hours are reduced, while shops and parks usually open and close later. In addition, no live music or dancing is allowed (so nightclubs tend to close for the entire month) and cinemas limit daytime screenings of films. Ramadan ends with a three-day celebration and holiday called Eid Al Fitr.

### Religious Holidays in the UAE

The two religious holidays (Eids) celebrated by Muslims are Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. Eid al-Fitr is at the end of Ramadan (as noted above) and it is when Muslim's shop for new clothes, gifts, and celebratory foods. Eid al-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice or Greater Eid, is the larger festival. It is approximately 70 days after the end of Ramadan.

Eid is a time to be thankful and generous. The three-day celebration following Ramadan is a time for feasting, visiting each other and to gather in large outdoor areas. The Government announces the holiday and organisations may then decide which days will be the non-working holiday, paid or non-paid.

### Time Zone

The UAE follows the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus 4 hours. Daylight savings is not observed in the UAE.

### Alcohol

Muslims are prohibited from alcohol consumption. Alcoholic drinks are available to foreigners in private clubs, hotels and restaurants. Non-Muslim expatriates can purchase alcohol duty free on arrival at the airport, or at specified liqueur shops in the country if you have a Liquor License (see page 11). Alcohol is not to be offered, sold or served to Muslims.

### Pets

Pets are uncommon among Arabic people. Dogs are especially thought to be unclean. Therefore, be sensitive to the reactions from your Arabic neighbours and co-workers. Do ensure that you keep your pets in a closed room when you have Arabic visitors at your home. At the same time, avoid having your pet in your vehicle when you have an Arabic friend in your car.

## Before Arrival

This section of the Employee Handbook provides you with information to help prepare for your move to the UAE.

### Visas and Sponsorships

A requirement to obtain a visa in the UAE is that your passport is valid for at least 6 months on arrival, and that there are at least 4 blank pages for entry/exit stamps. We suggest that your passport has

more than 12 months validity so that there is sufficient time to process all requirements once you are in the country without having to apply for a new passport.

Under UAE law, an appointee who is not a citizen of UAE must enter the country with an Employment Entry Permit or Employment visa, and his or her dependents must enter with a Residence Entry Permit. These permits (or visas) will allow the holder to enter the UAE once for a period of 30 days and is valid for two months from the date of issue. Once in country NA will assist with the visa process. If you are employed on an accompanied basis NA will assist with eligible dependent/s visa/s. If you are appointed on an unaccompanied basis and choose to bring dependent/s then you will need to arrange their visa requirements yourself.

### Employment Approval and Visa Application Process for Employees and Dependents

During the recruitment process the Company processes the following:

- Employment approval clearance from UAE government agencies (all employees must have clearance before travelling to UAE)
- Entry Permit – once employment approval received NA can apply for the Entry Permit which will be sent to the candidate along with the air ticket.

The situation for an employee's dependent/s will depend on nationality as UAE applies different rules to different nationalities and on the position held. If you are entitled to bring your dependent/s then you will need to sponsor them.

### Documents Required

You are required to bring, and have available on your arrival, the originals and authenticated and attested copies of important relevant documents as detailed below:

- For the employee:
  - Highest relevant Diploma/Degree Certificate **needs to be authenticated and attested**. If the document is in another language, then the certificate needs to be translated and the translated version also needs to be authenticated and attested
  - Other documents as advised by Recruitment Section.
- If accompanied the following authenticated and attested documents are required:
  - Marriage Certificate
  - Birth Certificates of dependent children
  - Adoption/Custody Papers where applicable, including a No Objection Letter from the Mother or Father not accompanying the child (where child accompanying a solo parent), and from the biological parent of a stepchild/children

### Authenticated and Attested Documents

The Authentication and Attestation of documents is a legal requirement in the UAE as a guarantee that the documents contain truthful and accurate information. It is also a condition of employment with NA. The process may take several weeks, and you need to check with the relevant government department in the country where the document was issued and the UAE Embassy accredited to that country regarding the procedure as it will differ from country to country. You can also check online regarding the process in the relevant country. The normal process is as follows:

- Original document/s to be notarised by a Public Notary.
- The notarised document/s to be submitted to the government agency responsible for foreign affairs for authentication (legalisation).



- The authenticated documents then need to be submitted to the relevant UAE Embassy for attestation.

All fees for these processes are the individual's responsibility.

#### Notes on Entry Permit/Visas

**Arrival: Entry Permit/Residence Visa:** Once the Entry Permit process has commenced you cannot enter or leave the country until the process is finished and you are either entering the country with a copy of the Entry Permit, or, if already in country, you have your residency visa in your passport. If you do so, then the process needs to be cancelled and a new application made.

**Departure: Cancellation of Visa:** On leaving employment NA are required to cancel your visa. This process takes a number of days for which your passport is required.

#### Additional Requirements

Additional documents you are required to bring are:

- Original home country driving license
- Dependent children school reports (if applicable)

#### Medical

- Inoculations: No immunizations are required for travel to the UAE.
- Healthcare Professionals: As advised separately healthcare professionals are required to fill in a Medical Form and submit with their application. That forms the basis of ongoing medical requirements.
- Health Insurance: Health insurance is provided for all employees, and for eligible dependents for those in an accompanied position. Unaccompanied employees who choose to bring their family will be required to arrange health insurance for their dependent/s.
- See Customs Regulations below regarding restricted medications
- **Medical Check:** A medical check, including blood tests and x-ray, is arranged for employees a few days after arrival in UAE as part of the visa process

#### Customs Regulations

The customs regulations for visitors arriving in UAE may vary depending on whether you arrive in Abu Dhabi or Dubai, so please check regulations prior to arrival.

#### Restricted and Prohibited Goods

- Any kind of narcotics
- Any kind of firearms and ammunition, without a prior security approval
- Any kind of immoral or sexually explicit materials
- Any goods contrary to the regulations relating to the protection of commercial, industrial, moral, copyright, or artistic property in respect of which decisions are issued by competent authorities
- Alcohol is prohibited in unaccompanied baggage/freight

#### Duty-Free Allowances

Incoming passengers may bring into Abu Dhabi, duty free, the following items which can be purchased at the Duty-Free shop on arrival:

- 4 litres of alcohol, or 24 cans of beer not exceeding 355 ml each
- 400 cigarettes or a quantity equivalent to 2,000 AED
- Cigars equivalent in value to 3,000 AED
- 2 kg of tobacco
- Gifts and perfume equivalent in value to 3,000 AED

#### List of Restricted Medication in the UAE

The Ministry of Health in the UAE and enforced by the UAE Ministry of Interior and International Narcotic Controlled Board (INCB), has a list of [Controlled Medicines and Medications](#) for all travellers to the UAE.

#### Foreign currency

The maximum amount of foreign currency that can be carried into the UAE must not be in excess of AED40,000. Amounts in excess of AED40,000 must be declared to Customs.

#### Books, magazines, videotapes, DVDs

Books, magazines, videotapes or DVDs of a controversial nature that would be degrading to the UAE, Arabs, or Muslim countries or individuals, as well as any material of a sexual nature, may be confiscated by customs. The possibility of such material being confiscated is highly probable. Another option that may be taken by the Ministry of Information and Culture is to use indelible ink to mark over objectionable text or pictures; this is commonplace especially in magazines showing photos of lingerie ads, for example. All seized items may be retained by customs for as long as two weeks.

## Freight

#### Shipping

Please contact your local couriers and shippers to determine the most appropriate means to send your items. Your shipper will be able to advise you regarding cost, packing, UAE import regulations and inspection practices, insurance, shipping dates, etc. Be aware that Abu Dhabi Customs x-rays all shipments and will confiscate any restricted items such as alcohol. You may ship your items to NA. Addresses in the UAE only use P.O. Box numbers, not street names. NA address is:

(Name)  
National Ambulance  
PO Box 63788  
Abu Dhabi  
UAE

#### International Courier Services

The international courier services below offers online tracking of shipments:

[Aramex](#) – Aramex delivers internationally.

[FedEx](#) – Phone number is 800 3339

[DHL](#) – Phone number 600 567 567

[UPS](#) – Phone number 600 577 743

#### Mail and Courier Service

The UAE has a federally operated postal service. To learn more about postal services in the UAE, visit [https://epg.ae/portal/\\_en/index.xhtml](https://epg.ae/portal/_en/index.xhtml)

## In UAE

### Met on Arrival

NA will arrange for a representative to meet you at the UAE airport on arrival and take you to your accommodation. You will be advised of the details when you are issued your flight ticket.

### Other Details

Other details for information are:

- NA will be responsible for the cost of the temporary accommodation, if required, as advised prior to arrival. However, it is normal for employees to move into their permanent accommodation within the first few days after arrival
- Should temporary accommodation be required a self-service apartment will normally be provided with employees responsible for their own meals, laundry, internet and telephone requirements
- All employees go through an on-boarding process which normally starts on the first day of employment

### Bank Account

NA will assist you with opening a bank account. We arrange this with HSBC on arrival, however, the employee can choose to go to another bank if they prefer. To open a bank account an employee requires a copy of their passport, a passport photo and a Salary Certificate from NA.

### Payment of Salary

NA pays employees salary monthly at the end of the month. Your first pay will be on first pay day after your UAE bank account has been established. You will be required to complete a payroll form as part of the on-boarding process.

### Health Insurance Card

It is mandatory for an employer to provide health insurance for all employees in UAE. Employees, and dependents where applicable, are covered by health insurance from arrival. Their Health Insurance Card will be issued as soon as the Residence Visa is issued (a prerequisite).

### National UAE ID Card

A UAE Identity Card is mandatory for all expatriate residents and will contain the individual's electronic signature and photo. NA will arrange this for employees and eligible dependents. For 'unaccompanied' employees who bring dependents the application forms can be downloaded from the website <https://ica.gov.ae/> and an appointment will need to be arranged at one of the registration centres.

### Driving Licence

Personnel from the following countries are able to exchange driving licenses for a local license:

*Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, South Korea, Kuwait, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, USA.*

Personnel from other countries will be required to sit a driving test.

Licenses for employees will be arranged by NA if driving is part of your work requirement, however, you must provide your original current license from your home country. You also need to have the receipt that you have applied for an ID Card to be able to get a Driving Licence.

NA will cover the cost of the first driving test of employees recruited from overseas who are required to have a driver's license for their job. However, if the candidate fails, they will need to cover the cost of subsequent lessons/test/s. Further explanation regarding on-going failure of driving test will be given during the induction process.

Refer to <https://es.adpolice.gov.ae/trafficservices/PublicServices/Introduction.aspx?Culture=en> for further information on driving licenses.

### Getting around

**Taxis** – The main taxi service is Silver Taxis, and they are the recommended taxi service. Their vehicles have seat belts, and they use meters. You can hail a taxi on the roadside or, for a small fee, book a taxi with Trans AD on 600 535353.

**Buses** - There is a public bus service and fares are inexpensive. The buses have a numbering system and you will need to study the route maps and destinations on the bus signs & service application on DARBI (<https://darbi.itc.gov.ae/darbweb/map-viewer.html>)

### Telephones and Landline/Internet

**Mobile telephones** - Mobile telephones and sim cards are available through Etisalat or Du. There are many outlets for both providers and a SIM card costs from AED70. Alternatively, you can sometimes find them in supermarkets and malls. You will need to have a copy of your passport and either a copy of your visa or proof that it is in process, i.e., a letter from NA. Both post-paid and pre-paid are available and re-charge cards are sold in different denominations at a wide variety of outlets.

**Landline/Internet connection** - **Landline** and internet connection can be done through Etisalat or Du. You will require an application form (available online), your passport, evidence of application for visa, and tenancy agreement.

### Liquor License

You are allowed to purchase and consume alcohol with a liquor license, although there are rules regarding entitlement. Further information on how to obtain a liquor license, through the on-line system, will be provided during the company on-boarding process.

### Emergency Numbers

- **Police:** 999 (from anywhere in the UAE)
- **Helicopter Ambulance:** When calling 999, the police will dispatch a helicopter to transport the injured, if the accident is deemed serious.
- **Ambulance:** 998
- **Fire:** 997

### Useful Websites

**About the UAE - The Official Portal of the UAE Government:** <https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae>

## FEEDBACK

Any feedback or suggestions for improvement to this Policy, Processes or Procedures can be submitted to [ghse@nationalambulance.ae](mailto:ghse@nationalambulance.ae)

## DOCUMENT CONTROL AND OWNERSHIP

A review and update of this document will take place as necessary, when changes occur that identify the need to revise this Policy such as changes in roles and responsibilities, release of new legislative or technical guidance, or identification of a new policy area.

This document ownership for editing is identified as:

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

This controlled document is managed / overseen by [Procurement and Tendering Committee and/or Audit and Risk Management Committee and/or HR and Compensation Committee].

### Change Brief

Version No.	Date	Changes
5	August 2014	Updated
6	February 2017	Reviewed against updated legal register, No changes required
7	July 2021	<p>Due to review , update the map , changed Abu Dhabi to UAE, removed Abu Dhabi Clubs , Removed Abu Dhabi Websites and added the Link of the Official Portal of the UAE Government – About the UAE</p> <p><b>After Policy Review</b></p> <p>To make it more general (UAE). Make references regarding Northern Emirates.</p> <p>Change the map used- Arabian Gulf instead of Persian Gulf</p>