Employee Welfare Fund (EWF) is Back

Confirmed - Effective 1 October 2026

Following the one-year postponement announced by the Cabinet in August 2025, the Employee Welfare Fund (EWF) is now confirmed to commence on 1 October 2026. The implementing Royal Decree and Ministerial Regulations were published in the Royal Gazette in September 2025, giving employers a firm legal basis to plan for compliance – there is no further deferral expected.

The EWF, established under the Labour Protection Act B.E. 2541 (1998), provides financial security to employees upon termination of employment or death, alongside the Social Security Fund.

Key Legislation

- Royal Decree Fixing Period of Time for Collection of Contributions and Supplementary Contributions for the Employee Welfare Fund B.E. 2568 (2025) – Royal Gazette Vol. 142, Part 59 Kor, 14 September 2025; effective 15 September 2025.
- Ministerial Regulations Fixing Rates of Contributions and Supplementary Contributions of the Employee Welfare Fund B.E. 2568 (2025) – Royal Gazette Vol. 142, Part 60 Kor, 15 September 2025; effective 1 October 2026.
- Ministerial Regulations Prescribing Rules and Procedures on Managing Welfare Assistance for Employees in Case of Termination of Employment or Death of Employee (No. 2) B.E. 2568 (2025) – published 15 September 2025; effective 1 October 2026.

Who Must Participate

- Employers with 10 or more employees, unless exempt.
- Covered employers must register all employees as EWF members and remit both employee contributions and employer supplementary contributions.
- Failure to pay wages on time does not relieve employers of their obligation to remit EWF contributions.

Exempt Employers

- Employers with fewer than 10 employees.
- Employers providing a Provident Fund (PVF) that fully complies with the Provident Fund Act and covers all employees without exception, including those on probation or who opt out of the PVF.
- Employers offering equivalent welfare arrangements that meet regulatory requirements.
- Employers operating in: fishing business; household work not connected to a business; non-profit organizations; private schools (directors, teachers, and educational personnel); and private universities.
- Employers not required to participate may still join the EWF voluntarily, by mutual agreement with employees.

Contribution Rates

Duration	Employee	Employer
1 Oct 2026 – 30 Sep 2031	0.25% of wages	0.25% of wages
1 Oct 2031 onwards	0.50% of wages	0.50% of wages

- No wage ceiling applies (unlike Social Security Fund contributions).

- Contributions are due by the 15th of the month following deduction; the first remittance deadline is 15 November 2026 (for October 2026 payroll).

Employer Registration & Reporting

- Register employees using Form Sor Kor Lor 3 (or 3/1 for voluntary participants outside the mandatory scope).
- The Department of Labour Protection and Welfare (DLPW) issues Form Sor Kor Lor 4 (or 4/1) as evidence of registration.
- Report changes to employee information using Form Sor Kor Lor 3/2.
- Submit registration and update information by the 15th of the month following the relevant payroll period or employment change.

Employee Benefits

Employees are entitled to accumulated contributions, employer supplementary contributions, and investment returns upon:

- Termination by the employer
- Resignation
- Retirement
- Expiry of employment contract
- Mutual termination agreement

In the event of an employee's death, benefits are paid to the designated beneficiary (Form Sor Kor Lor 5) or, where no beneficiary exists, split equally among eligible heirs; if there are no eligible recipients, funds revert to the Fund.

Compliance Risks & Penalties

- A 5% monthly surcharge applies to unpaid or underpaid contributions; a partial month of 15 days or more is treated as a full month.
- Labour Inspectors may issue compliance orders, demand payment of outstanding amounts and surcharges, and seize, attach, or auction employer assets to recover what is owed.
- Failure to submit required forms or notify employee changes may result in imprisonment of up to 6 months, a fine of up to Baht 10,000, or both.

Key Actions for Employers

- Assess whether the business is subject to mandatory EWF participation or qualifies for an exemption.
- Review workforce numbers and employment arrangements.
- Communicate EWF requirements, contribution rates, and employee benefits to staff.
- Update payroll systems to accommodate employee and employer contributions.
- Where a provident fund or other welfare arrangement is already in place, confirm it satisfies the exemption requirements, and consider extending coverage to employees currently excluded (such as probationary or temporary staff).
- Establish processes for EWF registration, reporting, and contribution remittance.
- Maintain accurate employee records and contribution data to support regulatory reviews and audits.

Conclusion

The introduction of the Employee Welfare Fund represents a significant development in Thailand's employee protection framework. From 1 October 2026, employers with 10 or more employees will generally be required to participate in the Fund through matching employee and employer contributions, together with ongoing registration, reporting, and remittance obligations.

Given the operational and compliance implications, employers should begin reviewing their workforce arrangements, payroll systems, and employee benefit structures well in advance to ensure readiness for implementation and to mitigate regulatory risk.