



## Offshore Legal Recruitment - Dubai

The Middle East is flourishing for a number of reasons. Massive levels of investment, and measures to attract business to the region are working. The region wants the business so that it can continue to diversify and become a more complex economy, less dependent on oil. Business, in return, is attracted to an enterprising environment with a tax efficient profile where employees can enjoy a high standard of living.

The up-shot is that activity levels across many sectors are extremely high and this drives a need for lawyers. With a limited domestic resource, international firms and companies are naturally looking for international talent to meet that need.

For lawyers with the requisite experience there are opportunities in the UAE (mainly Dubai and Abu Dhabi), Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait, as well as other parts of the gulf.

### The Need for Lawyers

In-house and Private Practice opportunities in the Middle East exist and are opening up for Lawyers from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the US, South Africa and Europe. Lawyers with experience in the following areas are in demand:

1. Acquisition finance
2. Commercial
3. Asset finance Corporate
4. Project finance
5. Construction
6. Energy
7. Property
8. Capital markets
9. Infrastructure
10. General banking and most other areas of finance
11. Islamic finance

### Living In Dubai

Living in Dubai, particularly with small children, is fabulous. For eight months of the year the climate is wonderful, schools are of the very highest standards, crime is very low and there is a very active social life on offer for those who wish to take part and best of all, there is no income tax.

Western expats tend to live in either Jumeirah or Umm Suquiem. These two areas can be found between the coast and the Sheikh Zayed Highway, south of the Dubai Creek. There are many other residential areas but the majority of western expats can be found in one of these two areas. Families tend to live in villas, either bungalows or two storey buildings.

Annual rental figures for villas in Jumeirah or Umm Suquiem do not differ wildly though a good hunt through what is available might throw up some bargains. Furnished or un-furnished apartments are also widely available.

Expats can now buy property in Dubai, which also gives them automatic right to a residency permit.

## Climate

Winter sunshine averages eight hours per day, while the summer figure reaches as high as eleven hours a day. The climate of the UAE is, generally, hot and dry.

The summer months, from June to September, are too hot for comfort. Midday temperatures range from 35°C to 42°C, and occasionally top 49°C at the height of summer. From December to March, the climate is considerably more equable with midday temperatures ranging from 25 to 35°C and falling to as low as 9°C at night.

Whilst much is written about the fierce heat of Dubai in the summer the fact remains that for eight months of the year the climate of Dubai is extremely pleasant; warm, dry days and clear blue, cloudless skies.

## Getting Around

Motorcars are tax free and as a result relatively inexpensive. Generally Western expatriates tend to buy 4x4 vehicles as off-roading and camping are two very popular recreational pastimes during the cooler months. There is also the added bonus of the security and safety offered by bigger, heavier cars.

Petrol is very cheap. A litre of unleaded fuel cost approximately eight British pence. Leaded fuel is no longer sold in the UAE. In the UAE you drive on the right hand side of the road. Drink driving is a very, very serious offence.

## Health

There are a number of private clinics and hospitals in Dubai offering a very high standard of health care. Private health insurance is a must for all expatriates though this is generally offered by firms as part of the employee's benefits package. The government hospitals are generally of a good standard. Of particular note is the Al Wasl hospital which specialises in Maternity and Paediatrics and which has an excellent reputation.

## Education

There are many English-speaking kindergartens, particularly in the residential areas of Jumeirah and Umm Suquiem. Full time education is compulsory for all children above the age of five.

Children of British expats tend to go to one of three primary schools: Jumeirah English Speaking School (JESS), Dubai English Speaking School (DESS) or Jumeirah Primary School (JPS). These schools take children from age 5 to 11. All three schools are based on the English school system and curriculum and all schools subscribe to OFSTED and are inspected and reviewed every year by OFSTED inspectors.

## Tips

If you are moving to Dubai to live bring lots and lots of passport size photos of you and any family members. Initially Dubai can seem a bureaucratic nightmare with permits and licenses required for absolutely everything to start life and every single application must be accompanied with at least three photos.

Unmarried couples are not permitted to live together by law. Whilst the police tend to turn a blind eye to such behaviour if in the course of investigating a burglary, for example, it becomes apparent to the Police that an unmarried couple are cohabiting quite severe punishments (followed by deportation) can be imposed.

Girls should dress modestly. Whilst it is sometimes easy to forget that we are living in a Muslim country you should remain sensitive to local cultural issues.

There is no requirement for girls to wear an 'abaya' for instance, but for going out and about longish skirts or trousers and tops which cover the shoulders are preferable.

There is no home delivery of post in Dubai and if you are concerned about personal mail being delivered to your place of employment then set up your own post box at one of the Emirates Post offices.

Drink driving is a very serious offence. There is a 'zero' limit for drink driving and offender are subject to an immediate one month imprisonment with the Court deciding on a fine or further confinement thereafter. Fortunately taxis are very cheap and very easy to come by