



RENEWING MY 5 YEAR THAI DRIVING LICENSE

A member's description of the process – August 30, 2010

I went this week to the Banglamung Land Transport Office (LTO) to renew my 5 year Thai driving license. The documents that were required from me were:

1. **Application Form** (get from desk at front entrance – [sample here](#))
2. **Vision/Reaction tests results form** (get from desk at front entrance – in Thai, print name on top line)
3. **Original Thai 5 year license**
4. **Immigration Residence Letter** (get from Thai Immigration Office)
5. **Photocopy of face page of passport** (name, number, issue date, etc.)
6. **Photocopy of page with latest Extension of Stay** (for me, the retirement stamp)

Note: You do not need a Medical Certificate when renewing a 5 year license.

I arrived at 8:20am and got in line for the desk at the entrance (facing the building the line will be to the left alongside the building – there is a small walkway between a row of shrubs and the building) – my Thai partner went up to the desk and got the blank forms for me (items 1 and 2), then took my place in line while I went to the table to complete the forms – the table is in front of the building at the entrance near the driver license desk (the desk has a sign in English – Driving License – all the other signs are in Thai).

I got back in line and when I got to the desk, they examined the documents and stapled them all together and gave me a queue number – orange background – and directed me to the 2nd floor (first floor above ground) waiting room (air conditioned). There is an electronic signboard in the front that has two columns and 3 lines – writing is in Thai – the first column is the queue number and the 2nd column is the desk (it appears that the top line is for the current number – the other two rows simply have the previous queue numbers).

When my queue number appeared, I went to desk 1 where the documents were again checked and kept – the LTO staff person told me to wait until my name was called (this will be from station 3 – which is the entry way to the area behind desks 1 and 2 – see layout at end of article). My queue number was 11, but a large group of Thais went through the entryway – they had queue numbers on a yellow background – not sure, but they may have been people that came back for retesting or else they were being given special treatment. Eventually, my name was called and I got in line at the entry way.

The line moved forward with each person standing in front of the color blindness chart (numerous red, yellow, and green circles of various sizes mixed together – the chart is located above one of the boxes used for the other tests) – the LTO person would point to a circle and you call out the color. After everyone in the group completed the eye chart, the LTO person explained (in Thai) the peripheral vision tests – when I got there, she said wait and let some Thais move ahead – this was apparently done because

she wanted the farangs in line to be together; then she explained the test in English – put your nose in the designated place, look straight ahead – a green or red light will appear on either side of your head, when it does, you call out the color.

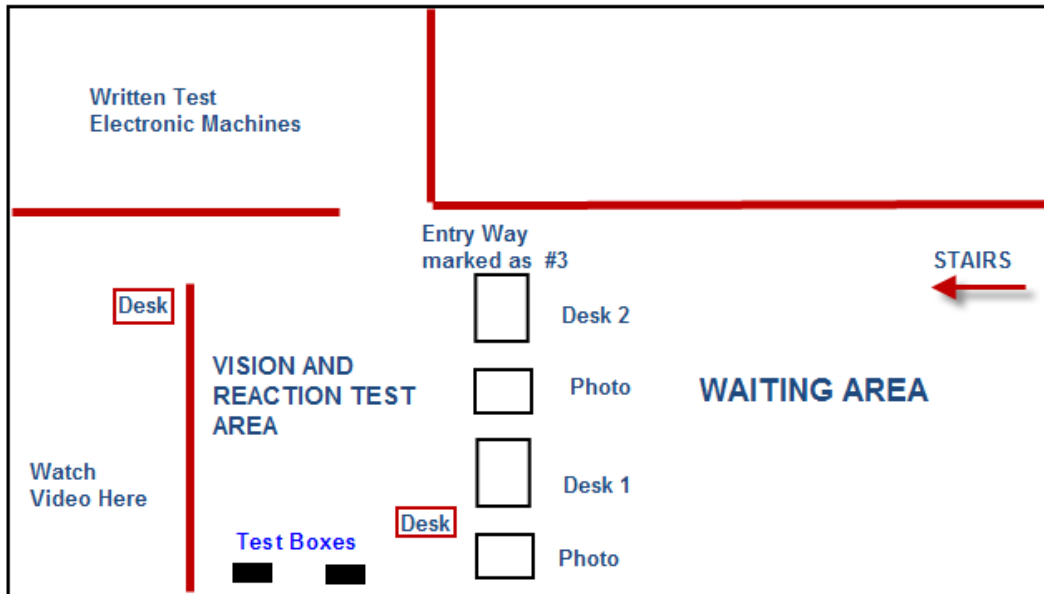
After everyone finished that test, then they lined up for the depth perception and reaction tests – there were two lines as there are two “boxes” available for the tests – the farangs were all put in the same line and the tests were again explained in English – first was reaction time – you sit and have a “gas” pedal and a “brake” pedal. You press the gas until a red light comes on, then you must quickly hit the brake pedal. A vertical row of lights will light up as soon as the red light comes on - starting with green at the bottom and ending with red at the top – you must hit the brake before the lights turn red. While still seated, you pick up a control box while looking into an enclosed box that has two vertical poles (maybe 6 inches in height). This is the depth perception test. One pole will be put at the back of the box and you press a green button to bring the pole forward till it is adjacent to the other pole – not sure how much variance you can have, but everyone seemed to pass.

They do give you 3 tries for each test – you only have to get it right once. After finishing the tests, I was then directed to another desk to the left of the testing area when facing the boxes – threading my way through the line of people still waiting to take their turn. This was the place where they couldn’t find my paperwork – after about 5 minutes, with me thinking the worst - they finally found it and I was directed to go to an area on the other side of the testing area to watch a video about driving in Thailand (Thai with English subtitles). I was told to stay there one hour – there is a ledger book you sign when you arrive at the desk at this section. The LTO person was making “cards” and handing them out to several people and directing them to the electronic machines used for the written test (not needed for renewal) – these cards evidently were used to activate the electronic testing machines. After sitting about 10 minutes, the LTO person at that section called my name and told me to go back to desk 1 in the waiting area (so much for having to stay one hour).

Actually, you go sit in the waiting room near desk 1 and they will eventually call your name. You will then pay the fee for the license (655 Baht for my car license) and then be told to wait again until your name is called for taking the photo (there are two photo stations with one adjacent to desk 1 and the other adjacent to desk 2). I waited about 5 or 10 minutes as they took care of people ahead of me – when my name was called, I sat down in front of the background screen while picture was taken – then instructed to switch to the stool next to the chair to wait while the LTO person finished making the license – he then handed me my receipt and my license.

Process complete – started at 8:20am and left with license in hand at 10:40am. Thankfully, I don’t have to do it again for the next 5 years.

LAYOUT OF THE BANGLAMUNG TRANSPORT OFFICE DRIVING LICENSE SECTION



BANGLAMUNG LAND TRANSPORT OFFICE - 2ND FLOOR