

# ID card reprieve for Emiratis with genuine reasons

By Binsal Abdul Kader, Staff Reporter

Published: March 30, 2009, 23:52

Abu Dhabi: On the eve of the deadline for Emiratis to register for ID cards, a top official said people who could not make it for genuine reasons need not worry about fines.

"If somebody has a genuine reason like being abroad or on treatment etc, we will accept it; but if anybody delayed due to laziness, no excuse," Darwish Ahmad Al Zarouni, Director General of Emirates Identity Authority (EIDA) told *Gulf News* on Monday.

He did not elaborate on whether people have to produce any proof for genuine reasons, saying, EIDA was not keen on punitive measures.

Today is the deadline for Emiratis to register for ID cards. EIDA had earlier announced that Emiratis who fail to register before the deadline would be fined Dh1,000. The original deadline of December 31 was extended to March 31 this year by a cabinet decision as about 190,000 Emiratis had not registered by December 28.

He said 96 to 98 per cent of Emiratis have already registered.

Although EIDA has not revealed the exact number of Emiratis, it had earlier said that estimates have been made based on 2005 census, which put the total number of Emiratis at about 825,000.

Asked the mode of fine payments, Al Zarouni said EIDA was not an institution to collect money but to serve the people. He reiterated that they would try their best to avoid issuing fines on people having genuine reasons. "They can come forward and register even after the time frame."

He said EIDA does not want to talk about punitive measures but encourage people to come forward to make a national project successful.

"Not only on Emiratis, we are not keen on imposing fines on expatriates also because everybody has been given enough time to register," the official explained.

The registration of expatriates is progressing smoothly, Al Zarouni said. "Now it is the time for category two, but some enthusiastic people from other categories are also coming forward to register," he said.

He advised expatriates to keep the timeframe allotted for each category.