

LEGAL
ALERT

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Single official identification system created for all citizens and foreign residents

Republic Act No. 11055 or the Philippine System Identification Act was enacted into law on 6 August 2018. It mandates the government to create a single official identification (“ID”) card for all citizens and foreign residents. This law aims to improve efficiency in the delivery of services, enhance administrative governance, reduce corruption, curtail bureaucratic red tape, promote ease of doing business, and strengthen financial inclusion.


Under the said law, the Philippine Identification System (“PhilSys”) is a system that centralises all personal information of Filipino citizens and resident aliens. It generates a Philippine ID (“Phil ID”) and PhilSys Number (“PSN”) that will be used to authenticate their identity in all government and private sector transactions, including but not limited to, applications for passport, drivers’ licence, tax-related transactions, voters’ registration, application to schools and bank transactions. This means there will be no need to provide multiple IDs to prove one’s identity. Providing the Phil ID or PSN will be deemed as sufficient proof of identity, subject to verification.

One year from the effective date of this law, although not mandatory, citizens and resident aliens can enter the PhilSys by registering in person with any of the following offices:

- Philippine Statistics Authority (“PSA”) Regional and Provincial Offices;
- Local Civil Registry offices;
- Government Service Insurance System (“GSIS”);
- Social Security System (“SSS”);
- Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (“PHIC”);
- Home Development Mutual Fund (“HDMF”);
- Commission on Elections;
- Philippine Postal Corporation;
- Other government-owned and controlled corporations assigned by the PSA; or
- Philippine embassy or any registration center designated by the Department of Foreign Affairs (“DFA”), if living abroad.

The following information will be requested from the applicant:

- Full name;
- Sex;
- Date of birth;
- Place of birth;
- Blood type;
- Address;
- Whether the applicant is a Filipino or resident alien;
- Front facing photograph;
- Full set of fingerprints;
- Iris scan;
- Other identifiable features based on the law’s implementing rules and regulations to be formulated by the PSA and expected to be completed by the end of October 2018; and
- Other optional information such as marital status, mobile number and e-mail address.



Nevertheless, critics point out that the law may threaten the privacy rights of individuals, or even be used to commit human rights violations because the information provided by the public may be used against them. In connection with this, the PhilSys will also record every instance a Phil ID or PSN is used in a transaction, aside from any modification of personal information. Privacy experts have said this could lead to “dataveillance” or a comprehensive surveillance system that tracks a person’s activities over an extended period.

The Philippine government responded and assured that it will protect the data in the database, amid concerns of possible data breach and privacy violations. It said that any related fear is based on anything that borders to illegal, given that, if at all, the Philippine ID will even aid in the country’s drive against the social menaces of poverty, corruption, and criminal issues as well as terrorism and violent extremism. The law imposes penalties of fines or imprisonment for any person who illegally discloses any PhilSys information or uses it for unauthorised purposes. Furthermore, personal data may only be disclosed to enforcement or security agencies in the interest of public safety and only upon a court order. In such a case, the owner of the information must be notified within 72 hours of the disclosure.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact [Felix Sy](#) or [Lorybeth Baldrias](#) Serrano or the ZICO Law partner you usually deal with.

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