

Protect Your Brand in Southeast Asia: First-to-File Determines Who Owns the Rights

What is the First-to-File Rule?

In many Southeast Asian countries, **trademark rights go to the first person to register**, even if someone else has been using the brand longer.

Act early—protect what’s yours! Early registration safeguards your brand against copycats, legal disputes, and missed business opportunities.

Why First-to-File Matters:

- Protects your brand before competitors
- Stops unauthorized use by copycats
- Strengthens your legal enforcement rights
- Increases the value of your business
- Makes international expansion smoother

First-to-File Countries in South East Asia (SEA):

Country	First-to-File?	Key Notes
Brunei	Yes	First-to-file principle enforced strictly
Cambodia	Yes	Registration secures exclusive rights
Indonesia	Yes	Limited protection for unregistered marks
Laos	Yes	Legal rights granted mainly to registrant
Malaysia	Yes	Registration required for full protection
Myanmar	Yes	Registration is key for protection
Philippines	Yes	Rights mainly from registration, not prior use
Singapore	Yes	Fast processing, strong legal enforcement
Thailand	Yes	Registration dominates disputes
Vietnam	Yes	Early registration essential for enforcement

Benefits of Registering Your Brand First:

- **Exclusive Ownership** – Only you can use your trademark legally.
- **Business Asset** – Trademark registration increases your brand’s value.
- **Legal Advantage** – Easier to stop infringement and copycats.
- **Peace of Mind** – Avoid disputes over who used it first.
- **Regional Expansion** – Registration makes entering SEA markets smoother.

Take Action Today!

Secure your brand before someone else does. Register across Southeast Asia and safeguard your business, your reputation, and your future growth.

Note: This leaflet is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice