

UAE to move to Western-style Monday to Friday working week

The United Arab Emirates is to officially introduce a Western-style Monday to Friday working week.

Like many Islamic countries, it currently has a Sunday to Thursday week – with Friday and Saturday as the days off.

The change begins next month and affects emirates including Abu Dhabi and the tourism hotspot of [Dubai](#), both home to big multinational firms.

It comes as the [UAE](#) tries to attract even more foreign business and compete with regional neighbours such as Saudi Arabia.

The government said state employees would work a half day on Friday – the Muslim holy day – so they can attend prayers, which will now begin at 1.15pm.

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It said it made the UAE “the first nation in the world to introduce a national working week shorter than the global five-day week”.

Private sector companies are likely to follow suit.

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In a statement, the government said the new hours would bring its financial sector into closer alignment with the rest of the world and “add to the flexible, secure and enjoyable lifestyle the Emirates offers its citizens and residents”.

Emirati newspaper The National said schools will also move to the new system on the first day of next year’s term.