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BUYER'S GUIDE

Thai title deeds explained

Chanote, Nor Sor 3 Gor and the rest

What each Thai land document proves, from the Chanote down to the Por Bor Tor 5 tax receipt, whether it can be sold, mortgaged or leased, and what a foreign buyer in Phuket should ask.

Thai title deeds come in grades, and the grade decides what can be done with the land. A Chanote (Nor Sor 4 Jor) proves ownership. A Nor Sor 3 Gor or Nor Sor 3 proves a right to possess and use the land, and both can be sold, mortgaged and leased. A Sor Kor 1, a Sor Por Kor 4-01 reform permit or a Por Bor Tor 5 tax receipt cannot be sold to you through the Land Office. A condo carries its own title, the Or Chor 2.

As a rule, a foreign buyer cannot own land in Thailand, so on a villa the title matters because your lease is registered on it. If the document cannot carry a registered lease, you do not have one. The rules on what a foreigner can hold are in Foreign Ownership in Phuket: How It Actually Works.

Which Thai title deeds can a foreign buyer rely on?

For a leasehold villa, a Chanote or a Nor Sor 3 Gor. For a condo, an Or Chor 2. The table sets out what each document can carry.

Document	What it proves	Can it be sold?	Mortgaged?	Lease registered?
Chanote (Nor Sor 4 Jor)	Ownership of the land	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nor Sor 3 Gor	Right of possession and use, plotted on the aerial survey map	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nor Sor 3	Right of possession and use, surveyed locally	Yes, after a 30-day public notice	Yes	Yes
Sor Kor 1	That the holder notified the State of possession when the Land Code came in	Not through the Land Office	No	No
Sor Por Kor 4-01	A farmer's permit to use agricultural reform land	No, only to heirs or the reform office	Not to a private buyer	No
Por Bor Tor 5	That local tax was paid on the land	No	No	No
Or Chor 2	Ownership of a condo and a share of the common property	Yes	Yes	Yes

What is a Chanote (Nor Sor 4 Jor)?

A Chanote is a title deed in the Land Code's sense: a document showing ownership of land. It carries a red Garuda emblem, and the plot is surveyed and fixed with numbered boundary posts. It is the title to look for if you plan to buy land and build.

A Chanote can be sold, mortgaged, leased and burdened with a usufruct or superficies. Every registered dealing is entered on the back of the deed. A lease of more than three years must be registered there to be enforceable beyond three, and Thai law caps it at 30 years. The detail is in Is a 30-Year Lease in Thailand Safe?.

What to ask: a copy of the deed, front and back, and the name of the owner on it. Your lawyer then searches it at the Land Office for mortgages, leases and anything else registered against it.

What is a Nor Sor 3 Gor?

A Nor Sor 3 Gor is a certificate of utilisation. It certifies that the holder has the right to possess and use the plot, and the plot is tied to the aerial survey map. It carries a green Garuda.

Sales, leases and mortgages on a Nor Sor 3 Gor are registered at the Land Office without a public notice period, much as on a Chanote. The difference is in the right itself. Possession can be lost if someone else takes the land and the holder does not act within a year. Ownership on a Chanote takes ten years of adverse possession to lose.

The holder can apply to the Land Office to have a Nor Sor 3 Gor surveyed and upgraded to a Chanote. **What to ask:** whether an upgrade has been applied for, and whether a neighbour objected.

What is a Nor Sor 3?

A Nor Sor 3 is also a certificate of utilisation, but the plot was surveyed locally on its own, with no link to the aerial survey map. It carries a black Garuda, and its boundaries are less precise.

It can be sold, mortgaged and leased, but the Land Office publishes a 30-day notice before it registers a transfer. Other dealings may need the same notice. It gives anyone with a competing claim the chance to object. That makes a Nor Sor 3 slower, and an objection can stop the transaction.

Build the 30-day notice into the timetable, and ask whether the seller will upgrade the document before transfer.

What is a Sor Kor 1?

A Sor Kor 1 is a notification of possession. Under the Act that brought in the Land Code in 1954, people occupying land had 180 days to tell the district they were there. The form records only that notice.

The Land Office cannot register a sale, lease or mortgage on Sor Kor 1 land, because there is no title to write it on. Under a 2008 amendment to the Land Code, holders had until 8 February 2010 to apply for a title in the ordinary way. An application made after that date needs a final court judgment or order as well.

What to ask: if the land is offered on a Sor Kor 1, ask whether a court order and a title already exist. Without them there is nothing for a foreign buyer to register a lease on.

Can you buy Sor Por Kor 4-01 land?

No. Sor Por Kor 4-01 is a permit to farm land allocated under the Agricultural Land Reform Act B.E. 2518. Section 39 of the Act prevents the land being divided or the rights assigned, except by inheritance or to the reform office or a farmers' institution.

From January 2024 the reform office began issuing agricultural title deeds on some of this land. They are still reform land, and transfers are limited to the reform office or eligible farmers. **What to ask:** whether the land sits inside a reform zone, whatever the paper looks like.

What is a Por Bor Tor 5?

A Por Bor Tor 5 is a receipt for local development tax paid by the occupier of unregistered land. It proves the tax was paid. Paying tax on land does not create a right to it.

The Land Office registers nothing on a Por Bor Tor 5: no sale, lease or mortgage. The Land and Building Tax Act B.E. 2562 replaced the old tax from 1 January 2020, so new receipts are no longer issued, though old ones still circulate. Much of this land is state or forest land. On a purchase, treat it as land with no title.

What is an Or Chor 2 condo title?

The Or Chor 2 is the title certificate for a condo, issued by the Land Office under the Condominium Act B.E. 2522. It shows ownership of the unit and the owner's share of the common property, which is fixed in proportion to the unit's price. It is the title on this list a foreign buyer normally holds in their own name.

A unit can be sold, mortgaged and leased, with each dealing registered on the certificate. Foreigners may own no more than 49 percent of a building's total unit area, and the purchase money must be brought into Thailand in foreign currency. **What to ask:** the building's foreign quota position in writing from the juristic office, and the bank's foreign exchange form before transfer. The rest is in the freehold condo guide.

Why does title type matter on Phuket's hillsides and beaches?

On a Phuket hillside, the date and basis of the title matter as much as its type. Clause 14 of Ministerial Regulation No. 43 (B.E. 2537) lists land on which title is not issued. That includes hills and mountains, a 40-metre margin around them, and land with a slope above 35 percent.

Section 61 of the Land Code lets the Director-General of the Land Department revoke or correct a document issued inaccurately or unlawfully. An investigation committee hears the people affected first. The holder at the time is the one affected, whoever bought it.

Phuket's building rules also turn on the title date. A Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment announcement in force from 14 December 2024 opened land between 80 and 140 metres above sea level to building. Excluded areas, such as the Nakkerd hills, stay outside it. The reported conditions

start with a title issued before 2017. After that come a single building no higher than 6 metres, a footprint of up to 90 square metres and 70 percent of the plot left green. Two Chanotes on the same ridge, one issued in 2015 and one in 2019, can therefore be treated differently.

On the beach, the question is where the plot ends. The Civil and Commercial Code puts foreshores in the public domain of the State. That land cannot be sold except by special law, and no length of occupation turns it into private land. Building rules in the same 2024 announcement are also set in zones measured inland from the shoreline.

What to ask on a hillside or beach plot: when the title was issued, and under which section; the height above sea level and the slope; and whether the boundaries on the deed match the ground. An owner can apply for an official Land Office survey, and neighbours are summoned to witness it. The wider list of checks is in the Thailand property due diligence checklist.

If you own land in Phuket

Your title is the first document a buyer's lawyer reads. If you hold a Nor Sor 3 Gor, applying to upgrade it to a Chanote before you list gives the buyer one less question. If you hold a Nor Sor 3, the 30-day notice sits inside your sale timetable, so allow for it.

On hillside land, keep a copy of the title showing its issue date with your sale papers. Listing Your Phuket Property covers the rest of a sale.

Thai title deeds: questions buyers ask

Is a Chanote better than a Nor Sor 3 Gor?

A Chanote (Nor Sor 4 Jor) shows ownership of the land, while a Nor Sor 3 Gor shows a right of possession. Both can be sold, mortgaged and leased through the Land Office, and a Nor Sor 3 Gor can be upgraded to a Chanote.

Is Nor Sor 3 Gor safe to buy?

It is a registrable title that can carry a sale, mortgage or lease without a public notice period. It proves possession rather than ownership, and the holder can apply to upgrade it to a Chanote.

Can a foreigner own a Chanote in Thailand?

As a rule, no. A foreigner cannot own land, so cannot hold a Chanote in their own name. A foreigner can register a lease of up to 30 years on one, or own a condo on an Or Chor 2.

Can I buy land with a Sor Por Kor or Por Bor Tor 5?

Not through the Land Office. Sor Por Kor 4-01 land passes only to heirs or the reform office, and a Por Bor Tor 5 is a tax receipt that cannot carry any registered dealing.

What is the title for a condo in Thailand called?

The Or Chor 2, the condo title certificate issued by the Land Office. It shows ownership of the unit and a share of the common property.

The read

Under a villa lease, I would accept a Chanote or a Nor Sor 3 Gor and nothing below that. On a hillside, I would want to know when and how the title was issued before looking at the view.

Checking the paper costs very little before transfer. After transfer, any problem with it is yours.

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Sources: Land Code B.E. 2497, sections 1, 58 ter, 61 and 86, and the Act Promulgating the Land Code, section 5 (unofficial English translation); Land Department, Nakhon Sawan Provincial Land Office public manual on transfers requiring a 30-day notice (Nor Sor 3); Land Department circular on the Land Code Amendment Act (No. 11) B.E. 2551, section 8 (Sor Kor 1 deadline of 8 February 2010); Agricultural Land Reform Act B.E. 2518, section 39, as summarised in UTCC Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 10 September 2021; The Nation, 11 January 2024 (agricultural title deeds); Land and Building Tax Act B.E. 2562 (Forvis Mazars summary); Condominium Act B.E. 2522, sections 4, 13, 14, 19, 19 bis and 29 (Land Department English translation); Civil and Commercial Code, sections 538, 540, 1304 to 1306, 1375 and 1382; Ministerial Regulation No. 43 (B.E. 2537), clause 14, as cited in the Ministry of Interior notice in the Royal Gazette, 19 October 2026 (Thansettakij, 22 October 2026); Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment announcement on Phuket environmental protection measures B.E. 2567, Royal Gazette 13 December 2024 (The Phuket News and The Thaiger, January 2025); Thansettakij, 5 September 2022 (Garuda colours). This is general information, not legal, tax or investment advice. Take independent legal advice before committing to any purchase or lease in Thailand.