

Carefully select your Employment Agencies (“EAs”)

Beware of employment traps

Foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) should know the following when using the service of EAs in Hong Kong to protect their own rights

When engaging an EA

- Only solicit the placement service provided by licensed EAs. Check online for the list of EAs holding a valid licence issued by the Labour Department (LD) at the EA Portal (www.eaa.labour.gov.hk).
- LD has promulgated the Code of Practice for EAs (“the Code”). Make reference to the Code for the Do’s and Don’ts of the EAs. The Code is also available in the EA Portal.
- Check the genuineness of job vacancies offered by EAs, especially those overseas. In case of doubt, please consult your Consulate General (CG) or check with the CGs of the destination countries.
- Do not provide any false information in your Standard Employment Contract (“SEC”) (e.g. your wages, your employment address etc.). You may be liable for an offence for doing so. Keep the original copy of your signed SEC.
- Do not sign any documents, agreements or contracts etc. which you do not fully understand or agree.
- Browse the FDH Portal (www.fdh.labour.gov.hk) for the useful information concerning your rights and protection when working in Hong Kong.

Fees charged by EAs

- Under the law, EAs in Hong Kong are only allowed to charge you no more than 10% of your first month’s salary received as commission (i.e. prescribed commission). Such payment should only be made after you have received your first-month’s wages, and should not be made in advance.
- An EA should under no circumstances charge you any fees or expenses, be it directly or indirectly, in relation to the job-placement other than the prescribed commission.

- Always request a receipt for any payment made to the EA. It is better if you deposit the payment directly at EA's company account so that you can have the payment record. Avoid to deposit the money into the personal account of, or pay cash directly to, the staff of EA. Do not make any payment to EAs if they refuse to provide you receipts.
- Do not borrow money from any financial services companies to pay EA fees, even requested or suggested by the EA.

Other points to note

- You are only allowed to take up domestic work for your employer and work in your employer's address as specified in SEC. You are not allowed to work other than your employer's address as stated in SEC for any persons (including your employer) even if your employer or EA allows or requests you to do so.
- No one, such as EAs and your employer, should retrieve or withhold your personal property, including but not limited to your passport, Hong Kong identity card and SEC, etc. without your consent.

When your rights are infringed

- If you suspect yourself being overcharged by an EA or an EA is operating without a valid licence, you may contact LD at 2115 3667 during office hours or by email at ea-ee@labour.gov.hk. Report your case to LD immediately.
- For any enquiries or complaints related to your employment, you may call 2717 1771 (the hotline is handled by the "1823").
- If you are subjected to violence and abuse, or your safety is at risk, call 999 for emergency services of the Police immediately.
- If you are illegally deployed to work outside Hong Kong, call the Immigration Department at 2824 6111.

