Be Prepared for Employment in Hong Kong

A Handbook for Foreign Domestic Helpers

勞工處
Labour Department

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Part 1

Preparing for Employment in Hong Kong

Preparing for Employment in Hong Kong

Foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) help Hong Kong families with household chores and taking care of their children and elderly members, thereby allowing more family members to go out and work. FDHs contribute significantly to Hong Kong's economic development and our families welcome FDHs to come here to work.

If you are deciding whether to come to work in Hong Kong, you are advised to make an informed choice. This handbook aims to provide you with practical information and handy reference on working as FDHs in Hong Kong.

1.1 Knowing Hong Kong

As an FDH, you have to work in Hong Kong for a two-year contract. It is therefore useful for you to have a basic understanding of Hong Kong, such as its climate, customs and culture, lifestyle, etc., so that you can get prepared for living and working here.

1.1.1 Geography and climate

Hong Kong is located at the south-eastern tip of China. The city consists of Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories and Lantau Island plus 262 outlying islands. Its climate is sub-tropical with four seasons.

Season (Months)	Weather
Spring (March and April)	• Mild and humid with fog. Evenings can be cool. • Average temperatures normally range from 17°C to 26°C.
Summer (May to September)	• Hot, humid and sunny, with occasional heavy rain and thunderstorms. • Average temperatures normally range from 24°C to 32°C. • Rain could be particularly heavy and persistent in May and June. The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) implements a three-tier rainstorm warning system: amber, red and black. If the black rainstorm signal is issued, people should stay indoors or take shelter in a safe place. • Tropical cyclones usually occur from June to October. HKO issues different tropical cyclone warning signals to alert the public to the threat of winds, so that the public can take necessary precautionary measures. When the No. 8 signal or above is in place, people should stay indoors for safety. The overall structure of most buildings in Hong Kong is able to withstand strong winds though sometimes buildings will sway in the winds.

	• For more details on the warning signals issued by HKO, please visit the website of HKO (www.hko.gov.hk/contente).
Autumn (October and November) 	• Fine, dry and cool. Relatively cold at night and in the early morning. • Average temperatures normally range from 20°C to 28°C.
Winter (December to February) 	• Dry and cloudy, with cold spells. • Average temperatures normally range from 13°C to 21°C.

1.1.2 Customs and culture

Ethnicity and language

Chinese people make up 92% of the population. The remaining 8% are non-Chinese, such as Filipinos, Indonesians, Indians, Nepalese, Pakistanis and Caucasians.

Cantonese is the most commonly spoken language and over half of the population is able to speak English or Putonghua. Other than Cantonese and Putonghua, the three most spoken Chinese dialects in Hong Kong are Hakka, Fukien and Chiu Chau, especially among elderly persons.

Food

Hong Kong is renowned as a “food paradise”. Apart from Chinese cuisine, there is a wide variety of food choices (including Western, Japanese, Korean and Indian).

Religion

Hong Kong people enjoy freedom of religion. There are different religious groups like Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism. All these religious groups have a considerable number of adherents. Buddhism, Taoism and Christianity are the three major religions.

Chinese festivals

Hong Kong people celebrate both Chinese and Western festivals. Knowing more about Chinese festivals is one of the best ways to experience Chinese culture. Some major Chinese festivals are introduced below.

- **Lunar New Year**

  Lunar New Year is the most important Chinese festival which celebrates the beginning of a year. As a tradition, Chinese families will clean their homes before the new year and have reunion dinner on Lunar New Year’s eve. Besides, the Chinese consider red a lucky colour. When relatives and friends visit each other during the festival, they like to dress up in red, and children and unmarried adults will receive red packets.

- **Ching Ming Festival and Chung Yeung Festival**

  In Chinese culture, showing respect to ancestors is important. During these festivals, Chinese families will “sweep the graves”, pray to their ancestors and make ritual offerings.

- **Tuen Ng Festival (Dragon Boat Festival)**

  This festival is to commemorate an ancient Chinese poet called Qu Yuan. People in Hong Kong will watch dragon boat races and eat rice dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves.

- **Mid-Autumn Festival**

  This festival is celebrated on the night of the biggest and brightest moon of the year. Nowadays, people will hang lanterns and eat special sweet cakes known as "Moon Cakes" during the festival. People will also eat sweet rice dumplings which symbolise happiness, harmony and reunion.

1.2 Living in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is a vibrant and densely populated cosmopolitan city. City life here may be quite different from that in your home country.

1.2.1 Living environment

Most Hong Kong people live in compact high-rise buildings with lifts. Multi-storey shopping centres with escalators are also common in Hong Kong.

Tips

You are advised to observe the following safety tips when using lifts and escalators:

Safe use of lifts

- do not overload a lift;
- do not use a lift when there is a fire;
- children must be accompanied by adults when using a lift; and
- when trapped in a lift, you should not panic or attempt to open the lift door by yourself. Press the alarm bell button immediately. Keep calm and wait for help.

Safe use of escalators

- hold the handrail to keep balance;
- do not stand close to the step edge;
- do not use an escalator while pushing a baby pram. Use a lift instead; and
- children must be accompanied by adults when using an escalator.

1.2.2 Transport system

Getting around Hong Kong is easy and convenient by means of public transport, including the Mass Transit Railway, buses, minibuses, trams, taxis, ferries, etc. The Octopus Card is a stored value card that is accepted on most public transport and commonly used in Hong Kong.

1.2.3 Doing groceries

Doing groceries in Hong Kong is very convenient. Food, daily necessities and commodities can be purchased in supermarkets, wet markets, shopping centres, etc. These are usually located very close to most residential areas.

An environmental levy on plastic shopping bags is collected in Hong Kong. Except plastic bags which are exempted, retailers/sellers must charge a levy for each plastic shopping bag provided to their customers. Therefore, it is advisable to bring your own shopping bag at all times.

1.2.4 Money and banking services

The Hong Kong dollar notes in everyday circulation are $10, $20, $50, $100, $500 and $1,000. Coins are issued in denominations of 10 cents, 20 cents, 50 cents, $1, $2, $5 and $10. Since 1983, the Hong Kong dollar has been pegged to the US dollar at around the rate of US$1 to HK$7.80.

Hong Kong is an international financial centre. Banks are licensed and regulated by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority under the Banking Ordinance. Many banks provide online banking services, such as transferring money, making payments, etc. FDHs may remit money back to their home countries through banks or other licensed financial institutions, as well as electronic remittance services or e-wallets. There is also a new form of banks called virtual banks, which do not have physical branches and instead deliver retail banking services through the internet or other forms of electronic

channels. General information on opening of bank accounts is available on the website of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority in Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Nepali, Urdu and Punjabi (www.hkma.gov.hk/eng/smart-consumers/information-in-other-languages).

1.2.5 Environmental protection

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been encouraging the public to separate waste at source so as to reduce waste disposal and promote resources recovery. For example, three-coloured recycling bins for paper, metals and plastics are placed in public areas to facilitate separation of recyclable waste. Collection boxes of other reusable and recyclable materials such as clothing, rechargeable batteries, etc. are also placed in housing estates or buildings.

1.2.6 Saving water

Although we have a steady supply of fresh water by simply turning on the tap in Hong Kong, we should understand how precious water is and use it wisely. We can save water by slightly changing our daily habits. Here are some tips on saving water at home:

- do not wash clothes or vegetables under a running tap. Wash them in a sink or container filled with water;
- only run washing machines or dishwashers with a full load;
- turn off the tap while brushing teeth or soaping hands; and
- take shorter showers.

For more water saving tips, please refer to the video “Smart Boss, Smart Maria” or leaflet “Smart Boss, Smart Helper – Save Water

at home" published by the Water Supplies Department. The promotional materials are available in English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai (www.wsd.gov.hk/en/home).

1.3 Civic responsibilities

As a member of the community, you should observe civic responsibilities as well as other social norms in public areas (e.g. do not spit and litter, do not talk loudly in public areas, refrain from eating on public transport, etc.). You are also advised to follow general etiquettes in public, such as queuing up on public transport.

1.3.1 Keep the city clean

Littering, spitting, fouling of streets by dog faeces, or unauthorised display of bills and posters in public places are offences in Hong Kong. Any person who commits the offence is liable to a fixed penalty of $1,500. Relevant leaflets in English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai and Hindi are available on the website of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (www.fehd.gov.hk/english).

1.3.2 Smoking ban in public places and workplaces

Smoking is banned in the indoor areas of all restaurant premises, indoor workplaces, public indoor places and some public outdoor places specified under the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance. No person shall smoke or carry a lighted cigarette, cigar, or pipe in no smoking areas, otherwise he/she is liable to a fixed penalty of $1,500.

1.3.3 Prevent objects from dropping or falling from buildings

When performing domestic duties like hanging laundry, cleaning windows or balconies, etc., you should be careful not to let objects fall down to the street below. The Summary Offences Ordinance states that if anything is dropped or allowed to fall from any building to the danger or injury of any person in or near a public place, the person who drops that thing or allows it to fall commits an offence and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $10,000 and imprisonment for six months.

1.3.4 Road safety

You should observe road safety for the sake of yourself and persons under your care, such as:

- using the road-crossing facilities. Pedestrians should use proper crossing facilities like footbridges, zebra crossings or subways. Never cross or start to cross the road when the pedestrian light shows a "Red man" or a flashing "Green man". Any person who fails to comply with the duties of pedestrians stated in the Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations commits an offence and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $2,000; and

- wearing seat belts installed on their seats. Under the Road Traffic (Safety Equipment) Regulations, drivers and passengers of private cars, taxis and light buses who fail to wear seat belts, if provided on their seats, commits an offence and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $5,000 and imprisonment for three months.

1.4 Needs and expectations of Hong Kong families

An FDH's scope of duties varies according to the needs of individual families. In general, you will be assigned to handle domestic duties such as cleaning, cooking, serving meals, dishwashing, etc. Some employers may require FDHs to do groceries, take care of elderly persons and/or children, baby-sit, etc. Before accepting a job as an FDH, you should find out about the details of the job and its requirements. You can do so by asking your potential employer or employment agency (EA) for information. This will help you know more about the needs and expectations of your potential employer before you take up the employment.

Employers may expect the following from you:

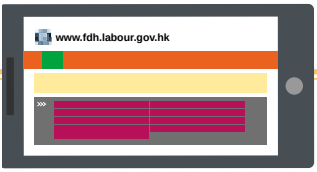
- efficiency – Hong Kong is a very fast-paced city that values efficiency. Employers expect tasks to be completed in a timely manner;
- multi-tasking and independence – Families with working parents are common in Hong Kong. You would be expected to handle different domestic duties independently;
- cautiousness – Various electrical and cooking appliances like vacuum cleaners, air purifiers, microwaves, ovens, blenders, etc. are commonly used in Hong Kong households. You should follow the instruction manual or learn from employers the safe and proper use of the appliances; and
- hygiene awareness – Hong Kong people are generally concerned about household and personal hygiene. They may expect the same from you. Since expectations and standards of employers vary, you should observe and follow your employers' requirements. For example, employers generally require their FDHs to wash hands before cooking or taking care of elderly persons and/or children.

1.5 Is working in Hong Kong suitable for you?

When considering whether working as an FDH in Hong Kong is suitable for you, you may consult relatives and friends who are currently working or have worked in Hong Kong as FDHs. You may also make a self-assessment by going through the following checklist:

- Have you travelled or worked overseas before?
- Will someone take care of your family members, such as your parents and/or children while you are working in Hong Kong?
- How well do you adapt to a new environment?
- Are you prepared to live and work in your employer's residence?
- Can you work independently?
- Have you already acquired sufficient job skills as an FDH like cooking, baby-sitting, etc.? If not, will you consider receiving some further training before coming to Hong Kong?
- Do you know a little English or Cantonese? If not, will you consider taking language courses?

Tips



FDH Portal (www.fdh.labour.gov.hk)

The Labour Department (LD) maintains a dedicated FDH Portal which provides information on the policy, labour legislation, publications, publicity videos, etc. relating to the employment rights and obligations of FDHs. Apart from Chinese and English, the Portal is available in the native languages of most FDHs, including Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Sinhala, Bengali, Nepali, Urdu, Myanmar Language and Khmer, so as to facilitate FDHs' understanding of the information. You may access the information at any time.

Part 2

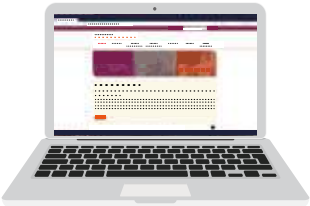
Working in Hong Kong

Working in Hong Kong

It is not a requirement of the HKSAR Government that FDHs should find a job through EAs. However, your home country may have such a requirement. You are advised to check with the authorities in your home country if necessary.

2.1 Obtaining employment in Hong Kong

You can seek employment through direct hire by employers or job placement service by EAs in Hong Kong and in your home country. Before engaging an EA in Hong Kong, you are advised to visit LD's EA Portal (www.eaa.labour.gov.hk/en/home.html) for important information (including the relevant legislation and reference materials such as points-to-note etc.) when engaging EAs.



2.1.1 Direct hire

Employers may submit the required documents and fees directly to the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the consulates concerned.

2.1.2 Engaging an EA in Hong Kong

If you choose to use the services of EAs in Hong Kong, you are encouraged to pay attention to the following:

- you can obtain information about the quality of services and reputation of EAs through various channels, such as word-of-mouth recommendation from friends and relatives;

- only licensed EAs can provide job placement service in Hong Kong. You should only engage EAs with a valid licence issued by LD. To verify whether an EA is licensed or not, you can use the search function on the EA Portal to look for licensed EAs. You may also access records of conviction, revocation/refusal of renewal of licence and written warnings of EAs through the EA Portal; and

- you should make reference to the Code of Practice for Employment Agencies (CoP) promulgated by LD which sets out the salient statutory requirements in relation to operating EAs and the standards which the Commissioner for Labour expects from EAs.

2.2 Dealing with EAs

2.2.1 Fees charged by EAs

Under the law, EAs in Hong Kong are only allowed to charge FDHs a commission not more than 10% of their first month's wages received after being successfully placed in employment (i.e. prescribed commission). Such payment should only be charged after the FDHs have received their first month's wages and should not be charged in advance. An EA should under no circumstances, directly or indirectly, receive from job-seekers (including FDHs) reward of any kind, or any payment or advantages in respect of expenses or otherwise, except the prescribed commission.

You should always request a receipt for any payment made to the EA. Do not make any payment to EAs if they refuse to provide you with receipts.

2.2.2 Documents signed with EAs

To protect FDHs' interests, the CoP states that EAs should draw up written service agreements with FDHs, in which the details of services (including the scope of service, details of fees, etc.) should be set out. Before signing any agreement, you should fully understand the terms and decide if they are agreeable to you. Besides, EAs should provide FDHs with copies of all documents that FDHs have signed in their dealing with EAs. You should keep these records properly to protect your interests. Samples of service agreements with EAs in the native languages of most FDHs have been uploaded to the EA Portal for reference.

2.2.3 Bogus overseas job placement by EAs

It is legal for EAs in Hong Kong to provide job placement service to job-seekers for taking up genuine employment overseas. Before taking up the employment, you should check the genuineness of job vacancies offered by EAs, especially overseas ones. You may also consult or check with the consulates of the destination countries.

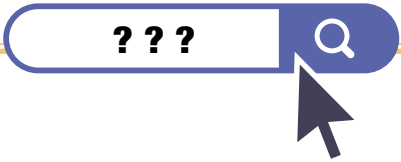
If you have any enquiry or complaint in relation to EAs, such as suspected unlicensed operation, overcharging job-seekers, intentionally providing false information or non-compliance with the CoP, you can send in your enquiries or complaints using the online form on the EA Portal. The online form is available in native languages of most FDHs. You can also contact LD at 2115 3667 during office hours or by email at ea-ee@labour.gov.hk for assistance.

Tips

EA Portal (www.eaa.labour.gov.hk/en/home.html)

FDHs are encouraged to browse the EA Portal before engaging an EA for more information such as:

- using the search function for finding licensed EAs by name, district, placement type, etc.;
- accessing records of conviction, revocation/refusal of renewal of licence and written warnings of EAs; and
- obtaining useful reference materials like the CoP, related information/publications and sample forms/receipts in native languages of most FDHs.



2.3 Standard Employment Contract

The Standard Employment Contract (SEC) (ID 407) specifies the terms and conditions of employment of FDHs in Hong Kong. It is prescribed by the HKSAR Government and is the only official contract for employing FDHs.

2.3.1 Signing the SEC

Before signing the SEC, you should fully understand and agree to the terms and conditions stated in the contract (e.g. job duties, accommodation conditions, etc.). To facilitate your understanding, sample SECs in the native languages of most FDHs are available on the FDH Portal for reference.

It is an offence for any persons (including FDHs) to make false statements or provide false information in the SEC (including wages and employment address). A person who knowingly and wilfully makes a statement or gives information which he/she knows to be false or does not believe to be true shall be guilty of an offence under the laws of the HKSAR and any such visa issued or extension of stay granted shall have no effect. In addition, a person who makes false statement/representation to ImmD commits an offence and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $150,000 and imprisonment for 14 years. Any aider and abettor will also be liable to prosecution.

2.3.2 Retaining copy of the SEC

The SEC is a very important document and you should keep the original of your signed contract. If an EA assists an employer and an FDH in handling the SEC, the EA should provide the original of the SEC (signed by both parties) to the employer and the FDH as soon as practicable after completion of the procedures. If the SEC cannot be signed by both parties at the same time, the EA should still provide a copy of the SEC that has been signed by you for your retention.

2.4 Medical examination

Under Clause 17 of the SEC, the FDH has to be medically examined as to his/her fitness for employment as a domestic helper and his/her medical certificate has to be produced for inspection by the employer.

If you refuse to undergo medical examination or provide your employer with a medical certificate, the employer may refuse to sign the contract.

Part 3

Job Duties and Responsibilities

Job Duties and Responsibilities

You may be assigned to perform different types of domestic duties. The following paragraphs provide some information on the major job duties of an FDH working in Hong Kong, as well as points-to-note on how to stay safe when performing domestic duties and handle emergencies.

3.1 Job duties

3.1.1 Cooking

Cooking is one of FDHs' main domestic duties. Yet, it may be a challenge to some FDHs at the start of employment since foodstuffs, cooking methods, seasonings, etc. are different from those in their home countries. You should take note of your employer's dietary preferences. For example, some employers prefer less salt and oil in their food. You may also look at cook books or cooking websites to improve your cooking skills.

Tips

Diet in Hong Kong

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has issued the following publications which may enhance FDHs' knowledge of the common food items and cooking styles in Hong Kong.

Booklet on "Common Food/Goods Items and Service Trades in Public Markets"

This booklet lists over 600 common food items, goods and service trades available in public markets, and is published in ten languages (including English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, etc.) (www.fehd.gov.hk/english).

Webpage on "Recipes of Chef's Daily Recommendation"

The recipes, updated on a weekly basis, provide cooking methods for preparing a daily meal of "Three Dishes and One Soup" for six days, and are available in English, Tagalog and Bahasa Indonesia (www.fehd.gov.hk/english).

3.1.2 Window cleaning

Window cleaning is another common domestic duty performed by FDHs. The SEC includes a clause on cleaning exterior windows to safeguard the occupational safety of FDHs. The clause states that, when an FDH is required by his/her employer to clean the outside of any window which is not located on the ground level or adjacent to a balcony (on which it must be reasonably safe for the FDH to work) or common corridor, the work shall be performed under the following conditions:

a) the window being cleaned is fitted with a grille which is locked or secured in a manner that prevents the grille from being opened; and

b) no part of the FDH's body extends beyond the window ledge except the arms.

3.1.3 Taking care of children

Families with working parents are common in Hong Kong. You may be employed to take care of their infants or children, with duties such as feeding, bathing, etc. You will be required to follow the children's daily routine such as bringing them to school or activities.

In addition, you should not leave children unattended at home, even for a very short period of time and especially when they are asleep, as there are many potential dangers such as fire or electric shock. Children may also fall from height, eat non-food items, etc. if left unattended. Make sure that window grilles are properly locked at all times. Never co-sleep with babies or place unnecessary soft objects, such as pillows, cushions, blankets and soft toys, etc. on their beds as babies can easily be smothered by these objects. You should inform your employer at once and seek immediate medical attention if a child in your care has sustained an injury, such as head injury, and especially after a fall even if there are no obvious or observable wounds. You should also ensure the children's safety and protect them from physical harm and sexual abuse. Hong Kong society does not tolerate any child maltreatment. It is an offence to harm a child. Child neglect is also unlawful in Hong Kong.

Under the Offences against the Persons Ordinance, it is unlawful for a person aged over 16, including a parent, who has the custody, charge or care of a child or young person under the age of 16, to wilfully assault, ill-treat, neglect, abandon or expose the child or young person, or cause or procure such child or young person to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned or exposed in a manner likely to cause such child or young person unnecessary suffering or injury to his/her health. If convicted, the person shall be liable to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for ten years. Under the same Ordinance, the person may also be convicted of (i) assault occasioning actual bodily harm, and subject to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for three years; or (ii) common assault, and subject to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for one year.

Under the Crimes Ordinance, a person who commits an act of gross indecency with or towards a child under the age of 16, or who incites a child under the age of 16 to commit such an act with or towards him or her or another, commits an offence and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for ten years.

You should intervene immediately if you see anyone causing harm to or indecently assaulting a child. You should contact the Police immediately in case of emergency and call the hotlines listed in the box below as needed.

Tips

The End Child Sexual Abuse Foundation has produced a promotional leaflet on the protection of children to call on FDHs, as a member of the family, to protect children from sexual abuse. The leaflet is available in English, Tagalog and Bahasa Indonesia (www.ecsaf.org.hk/english).

When necessary, FDHs may call the following hotlines for enquiries or assistance:

End Child Sexual Abuse Foundation hotline: 2889 9933
Social Welfare Department hotline: 2343 2255
Against Child Abuse hotline: 2755 1122

3.1.4 Taking care of elderly persons

With the ageing population in Hong Kong, more FDHs will help take care of elderly persons. FDHs who take care of elderly persons have to be patient and empathetic, and should be willing to lend them an ear. It is also important to take care of their safety and ensure their adherence to medication regimens, etc. You should inform your employer if an elderly person in your care has suffered an injury or has sudden changes in behaviour or mood.

Hong Kong society does not tolerate any forms of elder abuse. Elderly persons should not be treated with cruelty, inhumanity or insult. Elder abuse refers to the commission or omission of any act that endangers the welfare or safety of elderly persons. Elder abuse may involve criminal offences. For example, under the Offences against the Person Ordinance, the person may be convicted of (i) assault

occasioning actual bodily harm, and subject to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for three years; or (ii) common assault, and subject to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for one year. Under the Crimes Ordinance, a person who indecently assaults another person commits an offence and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for ten years. You should intervene immediately if you witness any abuse against an elderly person and contact the Police immediately in case of emergency.

3.1.5 Driving duties

According to the SEC, domestic duties to be performed by FDHs exclude driving of a motor vehicle. Moreover, the visa granted to FDHs to take up employment in Hong Kong is subject to the condition of stay that performing of driving duties is not permitted.

However, to address the genuine needs of some employers, a special arrangement is made by ImmD to allow FDHs to perform driving duties which are incidental to and arising from any of the five major categories of domestic duties (household chores, cooking, looking after aged persons in the household, baby-sitting and child-minding). Requesting FDHs to drive employers to and from the office, transport goods, etc. is not included. If employers request their FDHs to perform driving duties related to domestic duties, they may apply to the Director of Immigration for special permission.

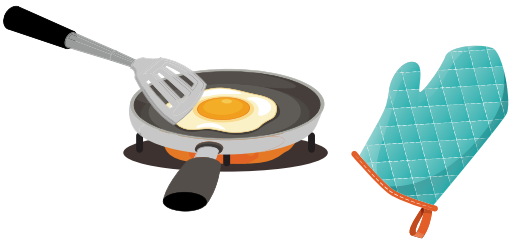
3.2 Home security

It is important to ensure security of your employer's house. You have to lock the door, windows and grilles before going to bed and leaving the house. You should not allow strangers or invite your friends to enter your employer's premises without the employer's or household members' agreement.

3.3 Occupational safety and health

While domestic duties may look simple, there are potential occupational safety and health hazards such as musculoskeletal disorders due to improper postures or repetitive movements; electric shock accidents caused by inappropriate use of electrical appliances; cuts, burns or scalds when working in the kitchen, etc. You are advised to pay attention to the following when performing domestic duties:

Domestic duties	Points-to-note
Cooking • There are many hot utensils and food in the kitchen. Carelessness may cause burns or scalds. • Cuts and slashes are common accidents in the kitchen, mainly due to improper use and handling of knives.	• Learn how to use the cooking stove at home and adjust the flame to a suitable level while cooking. • Learn how to store liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders if a LPG cooker is used. • Use insulated gloves for handling hot and boiling things. • Knives should not be used to open cans or drawers. • Cutting should be carried out on an appropriate cutting board. • Knives should be properly stored with the blades protected.



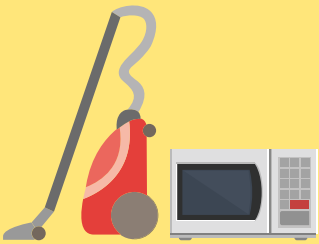
Performing above-ground work

Above-ground tasks such as cleaning air conditioners and changing light bulbs are common domestic duties that pose a risk of falling from height.

- Avoid above-ground work where possible by, for example, using tools to do the work safely on the ground.
- Use a suitable step platform if light above-ground work has to be carried out.
- Place the step platform on a firm, flat and level floor surface and as near to the work position as possible to prevent overstretching the body and falling from the platform.

Using electrical appliances

Electrical appliances like vacuum cleaners, microwaves, electric kettles, etc. are frequently used when performing household chores. If the electrical appliances are damaged or used improperly, it may cause electric shock, burn or fire.



- Adhere to the instructions in the user manual of the electrical appliance concerned.
- Check whether the electrical appliances are functioning properly and whether the electric wires are in good condition before use. Let your employer know if they are damaged.
- Avoid using extension units.
- Grip the plug and never pull the wire when unplugging. Never do it with wet hands.

Using chemicals

Cleaning is an important work process of domestic duties. It often involves the use of chemicals, such as detergents, solvents, bleaches, insecticides, etc. Improper use, handling, storage or transport of chemicals may affect health or lead to accidents.

- Learn how to use chemicals safely.
- Use less hazardous chemicals whenever possible.
- Follow the proper methods of use and safety measures for various types of chemicals, such as keeping away from fire and refraining from randomly mixing different chemicals as it may emit toxic gases.
- Wear proper personal protective gears such as gloves, masks, goggles, etc. when using chemicals.
- Cover and properly store chemicals in a shaded, dry, cool, and well-ventilated place.
- Do not eat or drink when using chemicals, and wash the hands, arms, and face after use.

Manual handling

Household chores often involve frequent and repetitive movements, such as propping up or lifting an elderly person or a child, moving furniture, etc. Any inappropriate physical exertion or improper posture will easily cause musculoskeletal disorders.

- Adopt proper posture for lifting and carrying objects. Keep the back straight.
- Avoid twisting or bending the waist, or overstretching the body.
- Avoid frequent and repetitive movements. Do some stretching exercises before work or during breaks.
- When propping up or lifting an elderly person or a child, you are encouraged to communicate with him/her to ensure the coordination of postures of both parties.

Tips

For safety and health tips on performing domestic duties, please refer to the leaflets published by the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) (www.oshc.org.hk/eng).

OSHC also organises courses on the General Safety for Domestic Helpers. You may enrol in the courses to enhance your work safety awareness and knowledge (www.oshc.org.hk/eng).

3.4 Handling emergency

You should ask your employer for contact means when the employer is away from home. In case of an emergency at home, you should inform your employer immediately. If there are life-threatening emergencies, you should seek help immediately by calling 999 for the Police and fire or ambulance services. If necessary, you should also seek assistance from neighbours and/or the security guards of the building.

Moreover, you should know where the first aid box is located and how to use basic first aid items such as adhesive plasters, disinfectants, etc.

3.4.1 Fire incident

If there is a fire outbreak in the house, you should tell everyone in the house to leave and close all the doors after leaving. You should be familiar with the means of escape and escape routes of the building.

You should also seek help by calling 999 for emergency services. When you are safe, you should report the situation to your employer. In addition, you can report any fire hazards to the Fire Services Department (FSD) by calling 2723 8787.

Tips

You may stay alone in your employer's home to perform domestic duties. It is essential for you to get familiar with fire safety. FSD has issued the following publications for advice and suggestions.

"Fire Escape" – provides practical advice on fire escape plans and related points-to-note. The leaflet is available in English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu (www.hkfsd.gov.hk/eng).

"Fire Prevention in the Home – Safety Guideline" – covers fire hazards and preventive measures at home. The guideline is available in English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu (www.hkfsd.gov.hk/eng).

3.4.2 Gas safety

Pungent odorants are added to town gas or LPG by gas supply companies, so that gas leaks can be detected easily. If you detect gas leaks, you should keep calm and ensure the household members' and your own safety first. Besides, you should leave the premises at once and call 999 for emergency services, and report the situation to your employer when you are safe.

Tips

When a gas leak is detected on the premises, you should:

- if possible, stop the gas flow immediately by turning off the emergency control valve of the gas meter;
- extinguish all naked flames;
- open all windows and doors wide to disperse the gas;
- do not use the telephone or operate any electrical switches and appliances;
- do not touch the switches of any gas appliances; and
- if the gas leak is serious or the situation is uncertain, leave the premises at once and notify neighbours by knocking on their doors (do not press any doorbells). Leave the building by stairs and dial 999 for emergency services.

For more information on emergency handling of gas leaks and safe use of domestic gas appliances, please refer to the following leaflets published by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (www.emsd.gov.hk/en/home):

"General Household Gas Safety" – the leaflet is available in English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai.

"Safe Use of Gas Appliances (Hot Pots)" – the leaflet is available in English, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai.

Part 4

Employment Rights and Protection

Employment Rights and Protection

Like local employees, FDHs are entitled to the same benefits and protection under the Employment Ordinance (EO) and the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (ECO). They are further protected by the government-prescribed SEC.

4.1 Accommodation

4.1.1 "Live-in requirement"

Under Clause 3 of the SEC, the FDH shall, during the employment period in Hong Kong, work and reside in the employer's residence specified in the contract. This "live-in requirement" is applicable throughout the FDH's employment period (including the period when he/she is on rest days, statutory holidays and paid annual leave) in Hong Kong. If the employer is away from Hong Kong or resides elsewhere from home for a short period of time, the FDH should not be compelled to take leave during that time, or to leave the employer's residence to reside in another place.

4.1.2 Suitable accommodation and with reasonable privacy

According to Clause 5(b) of the SEC, the employer shall provide the FDH with suitable and furnished accommodation free of charge. Under Item 3A of the "Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties" attached to the SEC, the employer shall provide the FDH with suitable accommodation and with reasonable privacy. Item 3A also lists

examples of unsuitable accommodation (including but not limited to the FDH having to sleep on made-do beds in the corridor with little privacy and sharing a room with an adult/teenager of the opposite sex).

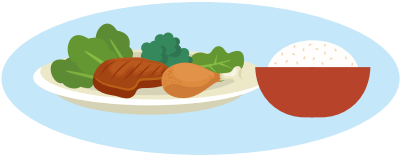
4.1.3 Essential facilities

As per Item 3B of the "Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties", the employer shall provide the FDH with essential facilities free of charge (including light and water supply, toilet and bathing facilities, bed, blankets or quilt, pillows, wardrobe, etc.).

4.2 Wages and food

4.2.1 Minimum Allowable Wage (MAW) and food free of charge (or food allowance)

Employers shall pay FDHs an amount of wages not less than the MAW announced by the HKSAR Government and prevailing on the date of the signing of contract. The current MAW rate can be found on the FDH Portal.



Under Clause 5(b) of the SEC, the employer shall provide the FDH with food free of charge. At present, most of the employers provide FDHs with free food. If food is not provided free of charge, FDHs shall be paid food allowance not less than the rate prevailing on the date of the signing of contract. The current food allowance rate can be found on the FDH Portal.

4.2.2 Pay day for wages

Employers shall pay wages to FDHs not less than once every month. FDHs' wages shall become due on the expiry of the last day of

the wage period. Employers shall pay wages to FDHs as soon as practicable but in any case not later than seven days after the end of the wage period. If an employer fails to pay wages to an FDH on time, he/she is required to pay interest on the outstanding amount of wages to the FDH. An employer who wilfully and without reasonable excuse fails to pay wages to an FDH on time is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $350,000 and imprisonment for three years. If wages are not paid within one month after they become due, an FDH may deem the contract to be terminated by the employer without notice. Under such circumstances, the employer is deemed to have agreed to pay payment in lieu of notice in addition to other relevant termination payments to the FDH.

4.2.3 Methods of wage payment

FDHs can agree with employers regarding the methods of wage payment such as by cheque, bank transfer, cash, etc. It is recommended that wages be paid by cheque or bank transfer to obtain payment records for retention.

If the payment is made by cheque or bank transfer, you may open a personal bank account held in your name after arrival in Hong Kong. No payment should be collected by a third party. If your employer asks you to sign any wage receipts or payment records, you should make sure you understand the content and the information is correct before signing. Do not sign any document you do not fully understand or agree to. You are also advised to ask for a copy of the signed records for retention. If your employer does not ask you to acknowledge receipt of wages or other payments, you are advised to keep such records on your own to avoid future disputes. Samples of payment receipts in different languages have been uploaded to the FDH Portal for reference.

Tips

An employer is prohibited from deducting wages from his/her employees (including FDHs) except under the allowable conditions specified under the EO. Some common allowable deductions are listed below for reference:

- deductions for damage to or loss of the employer's goods, equipment, or property by the FDH's neglect or default. In any one case, the sum to be deducted shall be equivalent to the value of the damage or loss but not exceeding $300. The total of such deductions shall not exceed one quarter of the wages payable to the FDH in that wage period;
- deductions for the recovery of any advanced or over-paid wages to the FDH. The total sum to be deducted shall not exceed one quarter of the wages payable to the FDH in that wage period; and
- deductions, with the FDH's written consent, for the recovery of any loan made by the employer to the FDH.

Unless with the approval in writing of the Commissioner for Labour, the total of all deductions (including but not limited to the above), except those for absence from work made in any one wage period shall not exceed one half of the wages payable in that period. An employer who makes illegal deduction from wages of an FDH is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $100,000 and imprisonment for one year.

4.3 Rest days, statutory holidays, paid annual leave and other leave entitlements

Under the EO, FDHs are entitled to rest days, statutory holidays and paid annual leave. FDHs may agree with their employers on their leave arrangements to accommodate the needs of both parties. Under no circumstances should an FDH be required to work during his/her rest days, holidays and leaves. For example, an FDH should not be asked to clean the household before he/she leaves home or wash the dishes after he/she returns home, etc.

Besides, FDHs should only sign records of leave or leave payment which they fully understand and agree to. You are also advised to ask for a copy of the signed records for retention. If your employer does not ask you to acknowledge the leave taken or the leave payment received, you are advised to keep such records on your own to avoid future disputes. Samples of leave records in different languages have been uploaded to the FDH Portal for reference.

4.3.1 Grant of rest days

An FDH is entitled to not less than one rest day in every period of seven days. A rest day is a continuous period of not less than 24 hours. Rest days may be granted on a regular or an irregular basis. Unless the rest days appointed by the employer are on a regular basis, the employer shall inform the FDH of his/her appointed rest days before the beginning of each month.

Except in unforeseen emergencies, employers shall not require FDHs to work on a rest day. For any rest day on which an FDH is required to

work, the employer shall substitute some other rest day within 30 days after the original rest day, and shall notify the FDH of the arrangement within 48 hours after the FDH is required to work. An employer who compels an FDH to work on a rest day is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000.

Besides, an employer may substitute some other rest day with the consent of the FDH, in which case it must be within the same month before the original rest day or within 30 days after it. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to grant rest days to an FDH is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000.

4.3.2 Grant of statutory holidays

An FDH, irrespective of his/her length of service, is entitled to statutory holidays. If an employer is unable to allow an FDH to take leave on the day of the statutory holiday, a prior notice of not less than 48 hours and an alternative holiday within 60 days before or after the original holiday shall be given to the FDH. If a statutory holiday falls on a rest day, the FDH shall be granted a holiday on the next day which is not a statutory holiday or an alternative/substituted holiday or a rest day. Besides, if the FDH has been employed continuously for not less than three months immediately preceding a statutory holiday, he/she is entitled to holiday pay. The holiday pay shall be paid to the FDH not later than the day on which he/she is next paid the wages after that statutory holiday.

Under no circumstances shall the employer make any form of payment to the FDH in lieu of granting a statutory holiday. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to grant statutory holidays or alternative/substituted holidays, or fails to pay holiday pay to an FDH is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000.

4.3.3 Grant of paid annual leave

An FDH is entitled to paid annual leave after having been employed for every 12 months. Entitlement to paid annual leave increases progressively from seven days to a maximum of 14 days according to the FDH's length of service:

Years of Service	Paid annual leave entitlements
1	7
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10
6	11
7	12
8	13
9 or above	14

The time of the leave should be appointed by the employer after consultation with the FDH, confirmed by a written notice to the FDH at least 14 days in advance, unless a shorter notice period has been mutually agreed upon. Any rest day or statutory holiday falling within the period of annual leave will be counted as annual leave and another rest day or holiday must be appointed.

The annual leave pay shall be paid to the FDH not later than the normal pay day after the period of annual leave taken. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to grant annual leave or fails to pay annual leave pay to an FDH is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000.

4.3.4 Other leave: no pay leave and seven days of paid/unpaid leave upon contract renewal

The arrangement of taking no pay leave should be agreed upon by both parties and no arrangement should serve to reduce the protection enjoyed by FDHs under the EO. An FDH should not be compelled by the employer to take no pay leave.

Under Clause 13 of the SEC, if both parties agree to enter into a new contract upon expiry of the existing one, the FDH shall return to his/her place of origin for a vacation of not less than seven days before the new contract commences (unless prior approval for an extension of stay was given by the Director of Immigration). Whether the vacation leave is paid or unpaid depends on the agreement between the employer and the FDH.

4.4 Employees' compensation

4.4.1 Protection under the ECO

Under the ECO, employers are required to take out employees' compensation insurance to cover their liabilities under the law (including the common law) for injuries at work in respect of all employees (including FDHs). An employer who fails to comply with the ECO to secure an insurance cover is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $100,000 and imprisonment for two years.

Employers shall bear the full cost of the insurance policy and shall not make any deduction from the earnings of FDHs to defray the cost. Employers are required, at the written request of FDHs, to produce the insurance policy and other documents relating to the policy for inspection.

An FDH suffering from incapacity arising from an occupational disease specified in the ECO is entitled to receive the same compensation and protection as those provided to an FDH injured in an accident arising out of and in the course of employment. When an FDH sustains a work injury or contracts an occupational disease specified under the ECO, he/she shall notify the employer as soon as possible. An FDH may also approach the offices of the Employees' Compensation Division (ECD) of LD or the insurer to ascertain if the employer has reported the case to LD. For details on the services provided by ECD, please refer to Section 9.1.1.

4.4.2 Handling work injuries

If an FDH sustains an injury or dies as a result of an accident arising out of and in the course of his/her employment, the employer is in general liable to pay compensation under the ECO.

The compensation includes periodical payments, medical expenses and lump sum compensation (in the case of death, or an FDH suffering permanent total or partial incapacity resulting from a work injury). An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to pay the compensation or relevant surcharge is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $100,000.

Tips

The compensation under the ECO includes the following items:

Periodical payments

The employer shall pay the injured FDH periodical payments at the rate of four-fifths of the difference between the FDH's monthly earnings at the time of the accident and his/her monthly earnings during the period of temporary incapacity. The FDH is not entitled to claim sickness allowance under the EO from the employer concurrently.

Tips

Medical expenses

Unless adequate free medical treatment has been provided to the injured FDH, the employer is liable to pay medical expenses for the treatment of the FDH's work injury, subject to the daily maximum rate stated under the ECO.

Lump sum compensation

► *For non-fatal cases*

An employer is liable to pay a lump sum compensation for the injured FDH's permanent incapacity. The amount of compensation payable is calculated with reference to the FDH's age, monthly earnings and permanent loss of earning capacity (as assessed by the statutory Employees' Compensation Assessment Board).

► *For fatal cases*

If an FDH dies as a result of an accident arising out of and in the course of employment, the employer shall be liable to pay compensation for death to his/her surviving members of the family. The amount of compensation payable is calculated with reference to the age and monthly earnings of the deceased FDH.

For more details on the calculation of the compensation payments, please refer to "A Concise Guide to the Employees' Compensation Ordinance".

If an accident incapacitates the FDH for not more than seven days and does not result in permanent incapacity, the employer may make direct payment or agree with the FDH as to the compensation payable in accordance with the ECO. For other cases, in general, the Commissioner for Labour will assess the compensation payable under the ECO and issue to the employer and the FDH a Certificate of Compensation Assessment stating the amount of compensation payable.

An employer shall not terminate the employment contract of an injured FDH unless the relevant Certificate has been issued by LD or the Employees' Compensation Assessment Board, as appropriate, or the compensation claim has been settled with the FDH. According to the ECO, an employer dismissing an FDH under such circumstances is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $100,000. In addition, the employer is required to pay the FDH payment in lieu of notice (if any) and other relevant termination payments*. The dismissed FDH may also claim remedies for unreasonable and unlawful dismissal under the EO.

* For more details on the calculation of the termination payments, please refer to "A Concise Guide to the Employment Ordinance".

4.5 Medical treatment

4.5.1 Free medical treatment

Under Clause 9(a) of the SEC, in the event that the FDH is ill or suffers personal injury during the period of employment (except for the period during which the FDH leaves Hong Kong of his/her own volition and for his/her own personal purposes), regardless of whether this arises out of employment, the employer shall provide free medical treatment to the FDH (including medical consultation, maintenance in hospital and emergency dental treatment). The FDH shall accept medical treatment by any registered medical practitioner as provided by the employer. The FDH is advised to keep a copy of his/her own medical records.

4.5.2 Sick leave and sickness allowance

Under the EO, an FDH shall be paid sickness allowance if:

- the sick leave taken is not less than four consecutive days (unless for any day off taken by the FDH for her pregnancy check-ups, post confinement medical treatment or miscarriage, any such day on which she is absent shall be counted as a sickness day and, subject to the following conditions, be paid sickness allowance);
- the FDH has accumulated a sufficient number of paid sickness days (paid sickness days are accumulated at the rate of two paid sickness days for each completed month of the FDH's employment during the first 12 months; and four paid sickness days for each completed month of employment thereafter. Paid sickness days can be accumulated throughout the whole employment period, but shall not exceed 120 days at any one time); and
- the sick leave is supported by an appropriate medical certificate (Regarding an FDH's medical examination in relation to her pregnancy, may also be supported by a certificate of attendance[1] apart from a medical certificate).

The daily rate of sickness allowance is a sum equivalent to four-fifths of the average daily wages of the FDH*. It shall be paid to the FDH not later than the normal pay day. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to pay the sickness allowance to an FDH is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000.

Except in cases of summary dismissal due to the FDH's serious misconduct, dismissal of an FDH who is on paid sick leave is prohibited. Otherwise, the employer is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $100,000. Moreover, the FDH shall be paid the payment in lieu of notice and other relevant termination payments*. The dismissed FDH may also claim remedies for unreasonable and unlawful dismissal under the EO.

* For more details on the calculation of the sickness allowance and termination payments, please refer to "A Concise Guide to the Employment Ordinance".

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[1] Certificate of attendance is not applicable to an FDH's medical examination in relation to her pregnancy conducted before 11 December 2020.

4.6 Maternity protection and paternity leave

4.6.1 Maternity leave and maternity leave pay

A female FDH is eligible for a continuous period of 14 weeks'[2] maternity leaves[3] if she has given the employer notice of pregnancy and her intention to take maternity leave. The FDH is entitled to maternity leave pay if she:

- has been employed for not less than 40 weeks immediately before the commencement of the scheduled maternity leave;
- has given notice of pregnancy and her intention to take maternity leave to her employer after the pregnancy has been confirmed (such as presentation of a medical certificate confirming her pregnancy to the employer); and
- has produced a medical certificate specifying the expected date of confinement if so required by the employer.

With the employer's agreement, an FDH may decide to commence her maternity leave from two to four weeks before the expected date of confinement. If an FDH does not decide on the date or fails to secure her employer's agreement to her proposed leave schedule, she shall commence her maternity leave four weeks before the expected date of confinement.

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[2] An FDH whose confinement occurs before 11 December 2020 is entitled to a continuous period of 10 weeks' matemity leave.

[3] Apart from 14 weeks' maternity leave, maternity leave also includes:

- if confinement occurs later than the expected date of confinement, a further period equal to the number of days from the day after the expected date of confinement to the actual date of confinement; and
- an additional period of leave for not more than four weeks on the grounds of illness or disability due to the pregnancy or confinement.

The daily rate of maternity leave pay is a sum equivalent to four-fifths of the average daily wages of the FDH* and it shall be paid on her normal pay day. An employer who fails to grant maternity leave to a pregnant FDH or fails to pay maternity leave pay to an FDH is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000.

If a pregnant FDH produces a medical certificate with an opinion as to her unfitness to handle heavy materials, work in places where gas injurious to pregnancy is generated, or do other work injurious to pregnancy, the employer may not allocate such work to the FDH. If the FDH is already performing such work, the employer shall within 14 days after receiving such request remove her from that work. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with the relevant requirements is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000.

Except in cases of summary dismissal due to the FDH's serious misconduct, an employer is prohibited from dismissing a pregnant FDH from the date on which she is confirmed pregnant by a medical certificate to the date on which she is due to return to work upon the expiry of her maternity leave. An employer who fails to comply with the above requirement is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $100,000. Besides, the employer is required to pay the FDH payment in lieu of notice and other relevant termination payments*. The dismissed FDH may also claim remedies for unreasonable and unlawful dismissal under the EO.

* For more details on the calculation of the maternity leave pay and termination payments, please refer to "A Concise Guide to the Employment Ordinance".

Tips

Q: Apart from the above requirements, how should FDHs deal with pregnancy?

A: No other maternity arrangement in respect of FDHs is stated in the EO and the SEC. Both FDHs and employers are advised to discuss the maternity leave arrangement as soon as possible in order to reach an agreement on it. If an FDH would like to return to her place of origin to give birth and take maternity leave, she may make such request to the employer. Both parties can discuss the relevant arrangement and the FDH may be allowed to take leave (if applicable) other than her maternity leave before 36 weeks of pregnancy, so that she and her baby may have the support from her family and friends in her home country, and she may resume duty upon the expiry of her maternity leave.

4.6.2 Paternity leave and paternity leave pay

A male FDH who is the father[2] of a new-born child or a father-to-be (the child can be born in or outside Hong Kong), and who has given notification to the employer as required under the EO, is entitled to five days' paternity leave for each confinement of his spouse/partner. The five-day paternity leave may be taken at any time during the period from four weeks before the expected date of delivery of the child to ten weeks beginning on the actual date of delivery of the child (in one go or on separate days). The male FDH is entitled to paternity leave pay if he:

[2] The FDH is not required to be married to the mother of the new-born child for entitlement to paternity leave under the EO.

- has been employed for not less than 40 weeks immediately before the day of the paternity leave; and

- has provided the required document to the employer within the 12 months after the first day of paternity leave taken, or if he ceases to be employed, within six months after cessation of employment (whichever period expires first):

  - the birth certificate of the child on which the FDH's name is entered as the child's father; or

  - if the child is born dead or dies after birth and no birth certificate has been issued in respect of the child, the FDH must produce a medical certificate certifying the delivery of the child.

The daily rate of paternity leave pay is a sum equivalent to four-fifths of the average daily wages of the FDH*. The employer shall pay the FDH paternity leave pay within the following time limit:

- if the FDH has provided the required document to the employer before the day on which paternity leave is taken, the employer must pay him paternity leave pay:

  - not later than the day on which he is next paid his wages after the day of paternity leave; or

  - if the FDH has ceased to be employed, within seven days after cessation of employment.

- if the FDH provides the required document to the employer after taking paternity leave, the employer must pay him paternity leave pay:

  - not later than the day on which he is next paid his wages after the document is provided; or

- if the FDH has ceased to be employed, within seven days after the document is provided.

An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to grant paternity leave or fails to pay paternity leave pay to an eligible FDH is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000.

* For more details on the calculation of the paternity leave pay, please refer to "A Concise Guide to the Employment Ordinance".

4.7 Termination of employment contract

4.7.1 Arrangement for contract termination

Under Clause 10 of the SEC, both the FDH and the employer may terminate the contract by giving one month's notice in writing or one month's wages in lieu of notice. Either party can only terminate the contract without notice or payment in lieu of notice under special circumstances[3]. The party that proposes the termination of contract should have sufficient justification for doing so, otherwise, he/she may face a claim from the other party.

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[3]

An FDH can terminate his/her employment contract without notice or payment in lieu of notice if:	An employer can terminate the employment contract without notice or payment in lieu of notice if the FDH, in relation to the employment:
• he/she reasonably fears physical danger by violence or disease;	• wilfully disobeys a lawful and reasonable order from the employer;
• he/she is subjected to ill-treatment by the employer; or	• misconducts himself/herself;
• he/she has been employed for not less than five years and is certified in a specified form issued by a registered medical practitioner or a registered Chinese medicine practitioner as being permanently unfit for his/her present job.	• is guilty of fraud or dishonesty; or
	• is habitually neglectful in his/her duties.

An employer shall not dismiss an FDH under the following circumstances:

Maternity protection	An employer shall not dismiss an FDH who has been confirmed pregnant and has served a notice of pregnancy.
Paid sick leave	An employer shall not dismiss an FDH who is on paid sick leave.
Giving evidence or information to the authorities	An employer shall not dismiss an FDH by reason of his/her giving of evidence or information in any proceedings or inquiry in connection with the enforcement of the EO or work accidents.
Trade union activities	An employer shall not dismiss an FDH for joining trade union or union activities.
Injury at work	An employer shall not dismiss an injured FDH before having entered into an agreement with the FDH for employee's compensation or before the issue of a certificate of assessment.

An employer dismissing an FDH under the above circumstances is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $100,000. In addition, the employer is required to pay the FDH payment in lieu of notice (if any) and other relevant termination payments*. The dismissed FDH may also claim remedies for unreasonable and unlawful dismissal under the EO.

Employees (including FDHs) and employers who have labour disputes which cannot be settled by themselves are advised to approach the offices of the Labour Relations Division (LRD) of LD for enquiries or assistance. LRD provides free consultation and conciliation services to both FDHs and employers to help resolve their labour disputes. For details on the services, please refer to Section 9.1.1.

* For more details on the calculation of termination payments, please refer to "A Concise Guide to the Employment Ordinance".

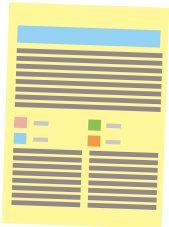
Tips

FDHs and employers may at times have disagreements which eventually turn into arguments. Both parties may believe that they have sufficient grounds to terminate the contract immediately. However, the best way to resolve disputes is to be considerate and tolerant of each other as far as possible and try to solve the problem together. They should refrain from hastily resorting to contract termination or other drastic actions to settle disputes.

4.7.2 Notification to ImmD of termination of employment contract

Under Clause 12 of the SEC, both the FDH and the employer shall give the Director of Immigration notice in writing within seven days of the date of termination. A copy of the other party's written acknowledgement of the termination shall also be forwarded to the Director of Immigration. Notification can be made by submitting a completed form "Notification of Termination of Employment Contract with Foreign Domestic Helper" (ID 407E) or a letter.

If the contract is terminated prematurely, an FDH is only permitted to remain in Hong Kong for two weeks after the termination of contract or the remainder of the permitted stay, whichever is earlier. If an FDH does not leave Hong Kong upon the expiry of stay, he/she will commit an offence for breaching the conditions of stay. He/She will be liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000 and imprisonment for two years. He/She will also be liable to removal from the HKSAR after serving the sentence. Persons so removed will not be allowed to come to Hong Kong to work as FDHs again.



4.7.3 Payments and items payable to an FDH upon completion or termination of the contract

Depending on individual circumstances, an employer normally has to pay the following items to the FDH upon completion or termination of the contract.

Items	Remarks
Wages	Any outstanding wages.
Payment in lieu of notice	Under Clause 10 of the SEC, both the FDH and the employer may terminate the contract by giving one month's notice in writing or one month's wages in lieu of notice to the other party.
Annual leave pay	When the employment contract is terminated, an FDH shall be given payment in lieu of any annual leave not yet taken in respect of every 12 months' completed service. If the FDH has been in employment for three but less than 12 months in a leave year (i.e. a period of every 12 months after the commencement of employment), the FDH is entitled to pro rata annual leave pay if the employment contract is terminated other than for the reason of summary dismissal due to his/her serious misconduct. Please refer to the following examples for the calculation method: • if an FDH resigns or is dismissed after 18 months' employment and he/she has not yet taken any annual leave: *Payment in lieu of annual leave for the first 12 completed months of employment (seven days) + the pro rata sum in lieu of annual leave for the remaining employment period (3.5 days).*

Annual leave pay	• if an FDH is summarily dismissed due to his/her serious misconduct after 18 months' employment: *Payment in lieu of annual leave for the first 12 months of employment (i.e. seven days, without the pro rata sum in lieu of annual leave for the remaining employment period).*
Long service payment	An employer shall pay long service payment to an FDH if the FDH has worked continuously for not less than five years and under the following circumstances: • the FDH is dismissed by reason other than summary dismissal due to his/her serious misconduct or redundancy; • the employment contract expires without being renewed^; • the FDH is certified in a specified form issued by a registered medical practitioner or a registered Chinese medicine practitioner as being permanently unfit for the present job and he/she resigns; • the FDH is aged 65 or above and resigns on the ground of old age; or • the FDH dies in service. ^ If the employer has offered in writing to renew the contract or re-engage the FDH under a new contract not less than seven days before the expiry of the contract, but the FDH has unreasonably refused the offer, the FDH is not eligible for long service payment.

Long service payment	*Formula for calculating long service payment:* *(Last month wages x 2/3) x reckonable years of service#* # Service of an incomplete year should be calculated on a pro rata basis. Note: An FDH will not be simultaneously entitled to both long service payment and severance payment.
Severance payment	An employer shall pay severance payment to an FDH under the following circumstances: • the FDH is dismissed by reason of redundancy, or the employment contract expires without being renewed by reason of redundancy^^; and • the FDH has not less than 24 months of continuous employment with the same employer immediately prior to the termination. ^^ If the employer has offered in writing to renew the contract or re-engage the FDH under a new contract not less than seven days before the date of dismissal/expiry of the contract, but the FDH has unreasonably refused the offer, the FDH is not eligible for severance payment. *Formula for calculating severance payment:* *(Last month wages x 2/3) x reckonable years of service#* # Service of an incomplete year should be calculated on a pro rata basis. Note: An FDH will not be simultaneously entitled to both long service payment and severance payment.

Food allowance	Any outstanding food allowance if no food is provided by the employer.
Free return passage	Under Clause 7 of the SEC, the employer shall provide the FDH with free return passage to his/her place of origin on termination or expiry of the contract. Points-to-note: • Generally, the employer will provide the FDH with an air ticket (including basic checked luggage). • The air ticket provided by the employer should take the most direct route. If the employer does not provide an air ticket with the most direct route to the place of origin, the employer may need to pay a higher daily food and travelling allowance due to additional travelling days. To ensure that both parties have sufficient and reasonable time to handle matters related to contract completion or termination, the FDH is advised to confirm the departure arrangement with the employer (such as departure date, destination, etc.) before the employer buys the air ticket.
Food and travelling allowance	Under Clause 7(b) of the SEC, a daily food and travelling allowance of $100 per day shall be paid to the FDH when the FDH returns to his/her place of origin.

An employer shall pay all wages and other payments due to an FDH under the EO and the SEC not later than seven days after the date of completion or termination of contract*. An FDH who wishes to claim for severance payment should serve a written notice to the employer within three months after the completion or termination of contract. The employer shall make the severance payment to the FDH not later than two months from the receipt of such a notice.

This handbook aims at providing a quick reference for FDHs on their rights and obligations relating to the employment in Hong Kong. For more details, please refer to "Practical Guide for Employment of Foreign Domestic Helpers – What foreign domestic helpers and their employers should know" (Practical Guide), "A Concise Guide to the Employment Ordinance" and "A Concise Guide to the Employees' Compensation Ordinance" published by LD. The Practical Guide is available in different native languages of most FDHs and you can access it on the FDH Portal.

As the actual circumstances vary from case to case, professional advice should be sought if necessary. The EO and ECO shall remain the sole authority for the labour law provisions described in this handbook. The Court is the authority on interpretation of the laws.

* For more details on the statutory entitlements and their calculations, please refer to "A Concise Guide to the Employment Ordinance".

Part 5

General Rights and Protection

General Rights and Protection

Apart from the labour laws, FDHs also enjoy other rights and protection when working in Hong Kong.

5.1 Equal rights and protection as local workers

FDHs enjoy free access to all the services provided by the HKSAR Government to local workers. For example, FDHs have full access to the free services provided by LD, such as consultation and conciliation services. For those with special language needs, they may make use of the free interpretation and translation service provided by the HKSAR Government. FDHs are also free to seek assistance from workers' unions of their own choice and/or their respective consulates in the HKSAR if they so wish.

FDHs also have equal access to justice. Aggrieved FDHs may seek redress through legal proceedings if they consider their statutory rights infringed. You may apply for legal aid from the HKSAR Government if the eligibility criteria (such as means test) is met.

5.2 Other rights and protection

5.2.1 Right to own and keep personal property

You should keep your own personal property such as passport, identity card, bank card, employment contract, the government's publications and leaflets for FDHs, etc. No person (including your employer and EA) can withhold your personal property. Any person who withholds your personal property (including but not limited to the items mentioned above) without your explicit consent may commit an offence.

If you are forced to surrender your personal property, please report it to the Police immediately.

5.2.2 Right to privacy

You have the right to personal privacy. Your employer is not allowed to inspect your personal belongings without your consent.

To ensure home safety and to take care of family members, some employers may install a closed circuit television (CCTV) monitoring system at home. If your employer intends to do so, he/she should notify you of the arrangement in advance, and should not make video recordings or capture images showing activities inside bathrooms or the private space where you rest after work. If such monitoring is carried out without your knowledge, your employer may be in breach of the provisions of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (PDPO). If you have any questions on the PDPO, you may approach the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data for assistance.

Tips

Your employer should refer to the following guidelines issued by the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data on the installation and use of CCTV monitoring systems at home:

"Monitoring and Personal Data Privacy at Work: Points to Note for Employers of Domestic Helpers" (www.pcpd.org.hk)

5.2.3 Protection against discrimination

Hong Kong has anti-discrimination legislation on sex, disability, family status and race. If an FDH considers that he/she is being discriminated against unlawfully because of his/her sex, marital status, pregnancy, disability, family status or race, he/she may approach the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) for assistance.

Tips

The EOC has published:

- "Understanding the Race Discrimination Ordinance: A Guide for Foreign Domestic Helpers and their Employers" — provides a general overview of the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) so as to allow FDHs and their employers to gain an understanding about the RDO and its application to themselves. The booklet is available in English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai (www.eoc.org.hk).

- "Preventing Sexual Harassment: A Guide for Foreign Domestic Workers and their Employers" — the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO) protects everyone in Hong Kong (including FDHs) from sexual harassment and sexually hostile working environment. The Guide covers the application of the SDO, rights of employees and responsibilities of employers under the SDO. It is available in English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai (www.eoc.org.hk).

Part 6

Obligations and Responsibilities

Obligations and Responsibilities

FDHs enjoy protection under the laws of Hong Kong. At the same time, they should comply with the statutory requirements and other regulations, and observe their conditions of stay in Hong Kong.

6.1 Restrictions on employment

FDHs must comply with the Immigration Ordinance (IO) and the conditions of stay as written on their visas. An FDH who breaches the conditions of stay, or any person who aids/abets an FDH in breaching the conditions of stay is liable to prosecution. The SEC states that:

Clause 4(a) - The FDH shall only perform domestic duties for the employer as per the "Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties" attached to the SEC;

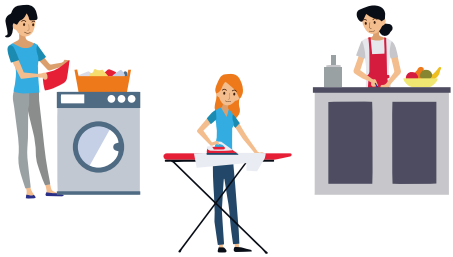
Clause 4(b) - The FDH shall not take up, and shall not be required by the employer to take up, any other employment with any other person; and

Clause 4(c) - Clauses 4(a) and (b) will form part of the conditions of stay to be imposed on the FDH by ImmD upon the FDH's admission to work in Hong Kong.

A breach of one or both of the said conditions of stay will render the FDH and/or any aider and abettor liable to prosecution.

6.1.1 FDHs shall only perform domestic duties

FDHs shall only perform domestic duties. The domestic duties, such as household chores, cooking, looking after aged persons in the household, baby-sitting, child-minding, etc., should be specified clearly in the "Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties" attached to the SEC.



If an FDH performs non-domestic duties, he/she may be in breach of the IO and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000 and imprisonment for two years, and subsequent removal from the HKSAR. If the FDH is so removed, his/her future applications to work in Hong Kong will normally be refused. If your employer requests you to perform non-domestic duties, you should decline the request. If your employer insists on the request, you should approach ImmD or LD for assistance.

6.1.2 FDHs shall not take up part-time employment

An FDH who takes up employment with any person other than the employer specified on his/her visa will be in breach of the IO. He/She will be liable to prosecution and removal from the HKSAR for breaching the conditions of stay. Upon conviction, the maximum penalty is a fine of $50,000 and imprisonment for two years. If an FDH is so removed, he/she will not normally be allowed to come to Hong Kong to work as an FDH again.

6.1.3 FDHs shall not perform domestic duties in places other than the employers' residence specified in the SEC

FDHs shall only perform domestic duties at the employer's residential address specified in the SEC. They are not allowed to work in places other than the employer's residential address stated in the SEC for any persons (such as the second residential address of the employer) even if the employer or EA allows or requests an FDH to do so. It is a breach of the SEC and/or relevant legislation to arrange an FDH to

perform domestic or non-domestic duties in other residences of the employer or outside the HKSAR.

If you breach the terms of the SEC and the relevant undertaking in the application forms, irrespective of whether it is voluntary on your part, ImmD may take such conduct into account in considering your future visa applications, and such applications may be refused. If your employer requests you to work outside the HKSAR, you should decline the request. If your employer insists on the request, you should approach ImmD or LD for assistance.

Some common examples relevant to performing domestic duties are as follows.

Situations	Explanations
Friends/relatives are invited to the employer's home for social gatherings and the FDH is requested to serve the guests and prepare refreshments, beverages and food.	There is no breach of the relevant requirements so long as the duties required to be performed by the FDH are the domestic duties specified in the "Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties" attached to the SEC.
The FDH is requested to bring food or daily necessities to members who live together in the same household but are temporarily hospitalised.	There is no breach of the relevant requirements so long as it is only a temporary arrangement to bring food or daily necessities to household members.
The FDH is requested to perform duties outside the employer's residence such as doing groceries, car-washing, bringing children to activities, taking care of children while dining in a restaurant or at a friend/relative's home.	These duties are services provided to the employer or his/her family members living in the same household. They are considered as domestic duties.

The employer resides alternately at two addresses, and the FDH is requested to perform domestic duties at the other residential address of the employer.	The employer's residence refers to a single residential address in one location. The employer cannot request the FDH to work at another residential address of the employer other than the one specified in the SEC.

6.1.4 FDHs shall not take up employment, establish or join in business without the approval of the Director of Immigration

An FDH who establishes unapproved business or takes up unapproved employment (e.g. illegal hawking) will breach the conditions of stay imposed on him/her. He/She will be liable to prosecution and subsequent removal, and his/her future employment visa application will be subject to close scrutiny. Any person who aids/abets an FDH to breach a condition of stay is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000 and imprisonment for two years.

Tips

FDHs should not engage in illegal hawking activities

- Hawking without a valid licence is an offence in Hong Kong. Offenders will be prosecuted and commodities will be seized. The maximum fine is $5,000 and imprisonment for one month upon first conviction. Subsequent conviction will be subject to a maximum fine of $10,000 and imprisonment for six months.
- Besides, engaging in illegal hawking activities is a breach of the conditions of stay and the FDH will be liable to prosecution and subsequent removal.

6.2 Limit of stay

6.2.1 Contract renewal

According to Clause 13 of the SEC, if both parties agree to enter into a new contract upon expiry of the existing one, the FDH shall return to his/her place of origin for a vacation of not less than seven days before the new contract commences (unless prior approval for an extension of stay was given by the Director of Immigration with mutual agreement between FDHs and their employers. Such extension of stay, however, should normally be no longer than one year).

If an FDH does not leave Hong Kong upon the expiry of stay, he/she will commit an offence for breaching his/her conditions of stay and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000 and imprisonment for two years. He/She will also be liable to removal from the HKSAR after serving the sentence. If an FDH is so removed, he/she will not normally be allowed to come to Hong Kong to work as an FDH again.

6.2.2 Contract termination

FDHs are required to leave Hong Kong upon completion of their contract or within two weeks from the date of termination of their contract, whichever is earlier.

If an FDH does not leave Hong Kong upon the expiry of stay, he/she will commit an offence for breaching the conditions of stay and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000 and imprisonment for two years. He/She will also be liable to removal from the HKSAR after serving the sentence. Persons so removed will not be allowed to come to Hong Kong to work as FDHs again.

6.3 Abuse of the arrangement for premature contract termination (commonly known as "job-hopping")

Under the prevailing policy, applications from FDHs to change employers in Hong Kong within their two-year contract normally will not be approved except under exceptional circumstances (e.g. if the FDH's contract is terminated on grounds of the transfer, migration, death or financial reasons of the ex-employer, or if there is evidence suggesting that the FDH has been abused or exploited). An FDH who wishes to enter into an employment contract with a new employer must first return to his/her place of origin and then submit a new employment visa application to ImmD.

If an FDH is suspected of "job-hopping", his/her future visa applications for working in Hong Kong may be refused.

6.4 Furnishing false information is an offence

The provision of any false information (including the employer's name, address or wage level) in the SEC is strictly prohibited. If there are substantial changes to the employer's residence and number of household members to be served, the accommodation and facilities to be provided, or domestic duties, the employer should inform the FDH and ImmD. The employer should also submit a copy of the "Revised Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties" (ID 407G) signed by both parties to ImmD for record.

FDHs should not provide or agree to requests by employers or EAs to provide any false information in the SEC. An employer who provides false information may be committing serious offences of making false statement/representation to ImmD and conspiracy to defraud. Under the prevailing laws, a person who makes false statement/representation to ImmD commits an offence and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $150,000 and imprisonment for 14 years. Aiders and abettors will also be prosecuted. Any person convicted of the offence of conspiracy to defraud (under the Common Law and punishable under the Crimes Ordinance) is liable to imprisonment for 14 years.

Part 7

Getting Along with Your Employer

Getting Along with Your Employer

FDHs and their employers live under the same roof and have close interactions. Effective communication, trust and respect are essential in building a cordial and long-term employment relationship.

7.1 Effective communication and building mutual trust

Although FDHs may have experience in performing domestic duties in other countries or working in Hong Kong before, the needs of local families vary and employers will have different expectations of FDHs. Sometimes, FDHs may feel frustrated when their performances are not up to their employers' standards. Communication can help both parties to understand each other better, so that FDHs can know employers' expectations and requirements. At the same time, employers can also understand their FDHs' needs and difficulties.

Coming from different countries, FDHs may have different cultural background, religious beliefs and eating habits. For example, Muslim FDHs do not eat pork, Buddhist FDHs may need to follow a strict vegetarian diet, etc. You should inform your employer of necessary arrangements to accommodate your religious customs and dietary preferences. If you believe you are not provided with appropriate or

enough food, or time for meal breaks/rest, you should discuss with your employer for appropriate or more food, or longer meal breaks/rest time.

Both parties are encouraged to discuss and fix a mutually acceptable work schedule. If you encounter difficulties in performing your tasks or following the work schedule, you should inform and discuss with your employer and ask for further instructions or a practical work schedule. You should also take note of the instructions from your employer to avoid making mistakes or missing any tasks. When mistakes are made, you should frankly admit them and tell your employer. You should also try to remember your employer's instructions and perform the duties appropriately next time.

Hong Kong employers are generally fluent in Cantonese and speak English and Putonghua. If you cannot understand your employer's instructions, you should ask your employer to repeat, speak slowly or provide more specific instructions/guidance. When necessary, online translation tools can also be used.

Open and frank communication enhances both parties' understanding and helps build trust between FDHs and employers, which is the key to a harmonious working relationship. Your satisfactory performance and willingness to learn would help gain trust and appreciation from your employer.

7.2 Respect each other

To maintain a friendly employment relationship, it is important to respect the privacy of your employers and their household members. FDHs are required:

- not to distribute any photographs or videos of the employers/ household members without their consent;

- not to disclose employers/household members' personal particulars like mobile phone numbers, addresses, etc. to a third party without their explicit consent, or else you may have infringed their privacy. Disclosure of such personal particulars would breach the requirements under the PDPO and as a consequence, the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data may issue an enforcement notice against the offender. FDHs who fail to comply with the enforcement notice may be liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $50,000 and imprisonment for two years.

FDHs must not use or take away employers/household members' belongings/properties unless they have explicitly consented to it. Theft is a criminal offence, offenders are liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for ten years.

7.3 Handling employment disputes

The EO is a major piece of labour legislation in Hong Kong which covers all employees (including FDHs) working here. FDHs are further protected by the government-prescribed SEC which sets out their employment rights and protection. If you believe your employment rights are infringed, you are advised to clarify the matter with your

employer and try to resolve the dispute together. If private settlement fails, both parties are advised to seek assistance from LD. For more details on the services provided by LD, please refer to Section 9.1.1.

Tips

Illegal work arrangement requested by employers

FDHs should be aware that they are not allowed to perform illegal work, such as working for a person other than the employer or in a residence not specified in the SEC, etc. For more details on illegal work, please refer to Section 6.1.

If an FDH is asked to take up an illegal job by the employer, he/she should refuse the request and remind the employer of the relevant requirements. If the employer insists on the request or the FDH considers his/her rights infringed, he/she should approach ImmD or LD for assistance.

Part 8

Maintaining a Healthy Life in Hong Kong

Maintaining a Healthy Life in Hong Kong

FDHs travel alone by themselves to work in Hong Kong. You may get homesick and encounter difficulties in adapting to work in a new environment. Staying physically and mentally healthy is a way to cope with homesickness and stress. You should take good care of yourself and make sure to relax at leisure time for a healthy work-life balance.

8.1 Coping with homesickness and stress

8.1.1 Dealing with homesickness

FDHs leave their families to work overseas and may feel homesick in the beginning. Homesickness may affect the work performance and social life of FDHs. Keeping an open and positive mind will help cope with the new changes more easily.

Hanging out with friends or participating in social activities during holidays can relieve homesickness. You can meet fellow FDHs from your home countries and spend leisure time together. You can also seek practical advice and tips from each other, which is useful in adapting to a new working environment. Besides, various government departments or organisations will arrange activities for FDHs. For details on the activities, please refer to Section 8.5.

Also, you can keep contact with your family and friends back home through instant messaging and video calls. You can chat with your family and friends during leisure time or after work.

However, if workload is the primary cause of stress, you are encouraged to discuss with your employer the difficulties encountered, and ask for guidance and adjustment to the work schedule if necessary.

8.1.2 Managing stress

The sources of stress may be job-related such as heavy workload, tight work schedule, miscommunication with your employer, inadequate rest, etc. FDHs may encounter both physical and mental symptoms like headache, insomnia, loss of appetite, forgetfulness, anxiety, etc. Work performance and productivity will be affected.

You may consider the following ways to cope with work stress:

- discuss with employer the priority of jobs, prioritise the tasks according to employer's preference and rearrange the work schedule if necessary;
- understand the sources of stress and talk to reliable people;
- think positively and stay happy;
- live a healthy lifestyle: regular and balanced diet, plenty of sleep and rest, regular exercise, enjoying hobbies and leisure activities;
- perform deep breathing and practise muscle relaxation;
- enhance the ability to cope with work stress, e.g. communication skills, time management and interpersonal relationship;
- improve or learn a new skill; and
- seek professionals' assistance when necessary.

You can also get support and assistance from the Social Welfare Department (Hotline: 2343 2255) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Samaritans – 24 Hour Multi-Lingual Suicide Prevention Hotline provides services in various languages (2896 0000).

8.2 Financial management

You should spend money wisely and manage your finances prudently and avoid falling into a debt trap. Developing good financial habits and being financially stable can prevent you from suffering from financial stress. FDHs should avoid taking out loans. If taking out a loan is unavoidable, you are advised to consider the following carefully before doing so:

- What is the loan for? Is it necessary?
- What are the total loan amount, interest rate and repayment schedule?
- Can I afford the repayment?

You should be mindful of the legislation relating to money lending in Hong Kong when borrowing money. Under the Money Lenders Ordinance, a person carrying on business as a money lender in Hong Kong must obtain a money lender's licence. Any person who lends or offers to lend money at an effective rate of interest which exceeds 48% per annum commits an offence and is liable to prosecution.

You should not let EAs get involved in your financial affairs directly or indirectly. You should under no circumstances repay EAs by taking out loans from financial institutions or individuals. Complaints against EAs which engage in malpractices can be lodged with the LD's Employment Agencies Administration (EAA). For filing enquiries or complaints with EAA, please refer to Section 2.2.3.

In recovering any loan made by an employer to an FDH, the employer is not allowed to deduct the FDH's wages except with his/her written consent and the amount deducted should be within the statutory allowable proportion of the wages payable in that wage period. For details, please refer to Section 4.2.3.

8.3 Personal hygiene and public health

8.3.1 Tips on personal hygiene

Maintaining personal and household hygiene can prevent the spread of diseases. You are advised to pay attention to personal hygiene as well as public health. You should:

- wash hands with liquid soap and water after using the toilet, after handling diapers, before preparing food, before and after caring for sick household members, after sneezing or coughing or after touching pets;
- take a bath daily;
- keep your nails clean and short;
- change your clothes and underwear daily;
- brush your teeth with toothpaste; and
- avoid sharing combs, toothbrushes, and other personal items with others.

Tips

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP), Department of Health has issued a booklet "Hygiene Handbook for Domestic Helpers" for providing information on personal and household hygiene, as well as basic infection control. The booklet is available in English and Bahasa Indonesia (www.chp.gov.hk/en).

8.3.2 When sick/injured

If an FDH is ill or injured, he/she should inform the employer for arranging medical treatment as soon as possible. Employers shall provide free medical treatment to FDHs in accordance with the SEC. The FDH may obtain a certificate of consultation or medical certificate from a medical practitioner to prove that he/she has received the medical treatment if the employer so requests. For details on provision of medical treatment, please refer to Section 4.5.1.

Adequate rest helps a speedy recovery. If you fall ill or are injured, you may discuss with your employer on having more rest or adjusting your work schedule if necessary. An employer should not ask his/her FDH who is on sick leave to work even if the FDH is not eligible for sickness allowance (such as he/she has not yet accumulated a sufficient number of paid sickness days, the sick leave taken is less than four consecutive days, etc.). For details on sickness allowance, please refer to Section 4.5.2.

If you are seriously ill, you should notify your family, the consulate in Hong Kong and/or your EA for appropriate arrangements.

8.3.3 Public health

Seasonal influenza

Seasonal influenza is a common respiratory tract infection caused by human influenza viruses. In Hong Kong, seasonal influenza is usually more common from January to March and from July to August. Influenza viruses mainly spread through droplets when infected people cough, sneeze or talk. The infection may also spread by direct contact with the fluids of infected people.

Given that seasonal influenza vaccines are safe and effective in preventing seasonal influenza and its complications, all people aged

six months or above (except those with known contraindications) are recommended to receive seasonal influenza vaccine for personal protection. Usually, it is suggested that vaccination should be received in autumn every year. For more information on seasonal influenza, you may visit the webpage of the CHP (www.chp.gov.hk/en) which is available in English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu.

Tips

Since coughing may generate droplets and spread infections, you are advised to maintain cough manners as below to prevent spread of viruses:

- cover the nose and mouth with tissue paper while sneezing or coughing;
- dispose of dirty tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin;
- wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water after sneezing or coughing; and
- put on a surgical mask while having respiratory symptoms.

Tuberculosis (TB)

TB is an infectious disease transmitted by air that is found globally (including in some Asian countries). When a TB patient coughs or sneezes, he/she can spread small droplets containing tubercle bacilli. These tiny particles can remain suspended in the air for several hours. Breathing in these particles can cause infection. Prolonged exposure, however, is usually required for the disease to be transmitted.

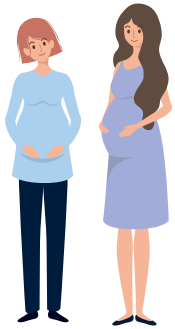
If you have symptoms of TB such as persistent cough, blood-stained sputum, loss of body weight, continuous fever, night sweating, poor appetite, etc., you should promptly inform your employer for arranging medical consultation. You may visit the Tuberculosis and Chest Service webpage of the Public Health Services Branch of the CHP (www.info.gov.hk/tb_chest/eindex.htm) for more information.

Measles

Measles is a highly infectious viral disease. It can infect any person who is not immune and may lead to serious consequences or even death. Measles remains an endemic infection in some countries in Southeast Asia (including Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand). Some FDHs may not have had measles immunisation in their home countries before they arrive in Hong Kong. Once infected, they may pass the virus to their friends and relatives, their employers and employers' families, especially infants who have not yet received vaccination.

The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine to prevent MMR infections. To prevent infection and transmission in the community, all FDHs who have not had measles infection confirmed by laboratory test before, and who have not been fully vaccinated against measles or have unknown vaccination status, are advised to receive the MMR vaccine, preferably before they arrive in Hong Kong. If this is not possible, they can consult a doctor after arriving in Hong Kong. For more information on measles, you may visit the webpage of the CHP (www.chp.gov.hk/en), which is available in English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu.

8.4 Women's health and pregnancy



Antenatal Care

If pregnant, you should attend antenatal checkup to ensure the health of you and your baby. The links below provide information on where to get antenatal checkup:

- www.fhs.gov.hk/english/main_ser/process.html
- www.ha.org.hk/visitor/ha_visitor_index.asp?Content_ID=10065&Lang=ENG

If you have enquiries relating to matters on women's health or pregnancy, you may call the following hotlines for consultation and counselling.

Information/services	Service providers	Hotlines
Unplanned pregnancy	Social Welfare Department	2343 2255
Contraceptive methods, emergency contraception and unplanned pregnancy	Clinics of the Family Planning Association Hong Kong	2572 2222
Family health	Department of Health	2112 9900 (24-hour)
AIDS and sexually transmitted infections	Department of Health	2780 2211

You may also seek advice or assistance from your employer if necessary.

Tips

General information about the health and medical services of the public hospitals in Hong Kong is available on the website of the Hong Kong Hospital Authority in Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Nepali, Urdu and Punjabi (www3.ha.org.hk/em).

8.5 Activities during leisure time

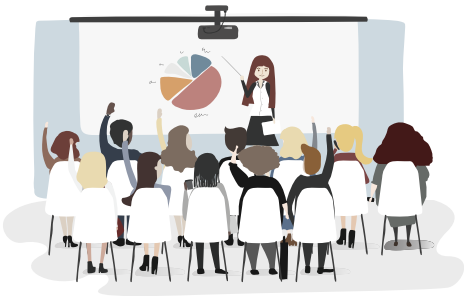
8.5.1 Activities organised by LD

Information kiosks

LD regularly stages information kiosks at popular gathering places of FDHs such as Victoria Park, Statue Square Gardens, Chater Garden, etc. on Sundays. The event includes games counters, video screening and exhibition displays to promote the rights and obligations of FDHs working in Hong Kong.

Briefings and workshops

To raise FDHs' awareness on their employment protection, as well as equip FDHs with knowledge and skills relating to their employment in Hong Kong (including occupational safety, public health, etc.), LD regularly conducts briefings and workshops for FDHs throughout the year.



Details of the information kiosks and briefings, and information on other activities are available on the FDH Portal.

8.5.2 Facilities provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)

LCSD provides a wide range of leisure facilities (including beaches, swimming pools, parks, playgrounds, museums, libraries, sports facilities, etc.) across the territory. For more details on the facilities available, please visit the website of LCSD (www.lcsd.gov.hk/en).

8.5.3 Radio programmes

FDHs may listen to the radio for updated information, news and entertainment during leisure time. Six radio programmes available in various languages are listed below.

Programmes (Language)	Channels	Air time
Selamat Pagi Indonesians (Cantonese and Bahasa Indonesia)	RTHK Radio 2 (FM94.8-96.9)	7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. on Sundays
Pinoy Life (English and Tagalog)	RTHK Radio 3 (AM567)	4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays
Saptahik Sandesh (Nepali)	RTHK Radio 3 (AM567)	7:05 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sundays
Hong Kong Ki Shaam (Urdu)	RTHK Radio 3 (AM567)	8:05 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Sundays
Desi Tadka (Hindi)	Metro Plus (AM1044)	4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays
Siam Meung Yim (Thai)	Metro Plus (AM1044)	5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays

Part 9

Support and Assistance

Support and Assistance

To help FDHs' integration into the community, both the Government and NGOs provide support and assistance to cater to their needs.

9.1 Matters relating to employment in Hong Kong

9.1.1 Matters relating to employment rights and protection

Claims related to employment entitlements under the EO and the SEC

In case of employment disputes (e.g. non-payment of wages, non-grant of holidays, non-compliance with employment contract terms, etc.), FDHs are advised to seek assistance promptly and should not resort to violence or other illegal acts. LRD provides free consultation and conciliation services to assist employees (including FDHs), in resolving their employment disputes. The addresses of the offices of LRD are listed in Section 11.2.

The conciliation officer will facilitate both parties to reach a mutually acceptable settlement at the conciliation meeting. If no settlement can be reached, depending on the claim amount, the cases may be referred to the Labour Tribunal (LT) or the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board (MECAB) for adjudication at the request of the party concerned.

If an employer fails to pay the awarded sum ordered by LT or MECAB, the FDH will be referred to the Legal Aid Department for assistance and to the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund for applying ex gratia payment to recover the outstanding payment.

An employer who wilfully and without reasonable excuse fails to pay an award of LT or MECAB within 14 days after the date on which the sum is payable, is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of $350,000 and imprisonment for three years.

Claims related to work injuries and occupational diseases under the ECO

ECD assists employees (including FDHs) who suffer from a work injury or an occupational disease to obtain compensation under the ECO. When an FDH sustains a work injury or contracts an occupational disease prescribed under the ECO, he/she shall notify the employer immediately. Employers must report the case to ECD within 14 days, otherwise the injured FDHs should approach ECD for assistance. The addresses of the offices of ECD are listed in Section 11.3.

Apart from civil proceedings, in the event that any suspected breaches of the EO or the ECO are detected, the cases will be referred to the appropriate division(s) for investigation. Prosecution may be instituted by LD where there is sufficient evidence. FDHs are encouraged to act as prosecution witnesses if necessary.

General enquiry and complaint channels

(a) Enquiries or complaints related to employment in Hong Kong

LD has set up an FDH hotline (2157 9537, handled by "1823") to provide one-stop support services to FDHs, including:

(1) providing advice to FDHs on their employment rights and obligations under the SEC and relevant labour laws;

(2) referring enquiries, requests for services or assistance and complaints on relevant labour matters, such as employment claims or complaints against EAs, to the relevant divisions of LD for follow-up and/or investigation; and

(3) advising or helping FDHs to contact the appropriate law enforcement agencies to file their enquiries, requests for services or assistance and complaints concerning suspected exploitation or abuse.

The hotline operates 24 hours a day in Cantonese, English and Putonghua. An interpretation service in seven languages (namely Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi and Urdu) is available from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday to Sunday (excluding public holidays).

You may also send in enquiries or complaints via the online form on the FDH Portal, which is available in 12 languages, or email LD at the dedicated email account (fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk).

(b) Enquiries or complaints related to malpractice and irregularities of EAs in Hong Kong

Sections 2.1.2 and 2.2 have explained in detail that EAs are required to operate in full compliance with the law as well as the CoP at all times.

For enquiries or complaints against any EAs suspected of unlicensed operation, overcharging job-seekers, intentionally providing false information or not complying with the CoP, please contact EAA by phone at 2115 3667 during office hours or email to ea-ee@labour.gov.hk. You may also lodge a complaint via the online form on the EA Portal which is available in six languages.

9.1.2 Matters relating to employment visa, conditions of stay and other immigration matters

For enquiries relating to immigration matters, such as information about the restrictions on employment, application for the Hong Kong Identity Card, extension of stay, renewal of employment visa, contract termination, etc., please call ImmD's hotline at 2824 6111 or visit ImmD's website (www.immd.gov.hk/eng) for more information.

9.2 Work outside Hong Kong is prohibited

According to the SEC, an FDH should only perform domestic duties for the employer at the address specified in the contract. Moreover, the employer must not require the FDH to take up any other employment with any other person. Violation of these terms would constitute breach of conditions of stay, and enforcement actions will be taken by relevant authorities. FDHs who are being deployed to work outside Hong Kong are encouraged to report it to LD and/or ImmD. Please call LD's FDH hotline at 2157 9537 (handled by "1823") or Immigration Offences Hotline at 2824 1551 for assistance if necessary.

9.3 Physical and sexual abuse

The existing laws protect any person in Hong Kong from physical and sexual abuse such as common assault, rape and indecent assault. FDHs are fully protected under the law as Hong Kong residents. They are encouraged to report abuse cases to the Police by calling 999 for emergencies or visiting the police station (www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en).

9.4 Services/assistance provided by NGOs

There are NGOs which offer assistance to FDHs working in Hong Kong. Some of the major ones are listed below. Please contact them for details of the services provided.

Name of NGOs	Contact means	Major Services
Caritas Hong Kong (Caritas Asian Migrant Workers Social Service Project)	Telephone: 2977 5997 SMS/WhatsApp: 5497 2899 Website: cd.caritas.org.hk/amp_eng.htm	• Hotline service for handling enquiries on the EO and immigration rules, and providing employment counselling and emotional support • Referrals of requests for temporary shelter, lawyer and doctor • Assessment on depression symptoms, conducting stress management courses and referrals of psychiatric services

Christian Action (Centre for Migrant Domestic Workers)	Telephone: 2739 6193 (Tsim Sha Tsui Centre) 2362 1922 (To Kwa Wan Centre) Website: www.christian-action.org.hk/en	• Provision of shelter and psychological counselling and consultation, as well as other emergency assistance • Support to FDHs for filing claims • Education programme to enhance knowledge on rights and benefits • Training and interest classes to enhance skills
Enrich HK	Telephone: 2386 5811 Website: www.enrichhk.org	• Provision of financial and empowerment education • Mentoring session on personal finance
HELP for Domestic Workers	Telephone: 2523 4020 WhatsApp: 5618 0689 WhatsApp (Bahasa Indonesia): 5493 4660 Website: www.helpfordomesticworkers.org/en	• Assistance in pursuing employment claims and any other entitlements under the employment contract and labour laws at LD and courts • Provision of legal advice to FDHs • Support to FDHs to enhance their knowledge on legal rights
Hong Kong Christian Service – Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents	Telephone: 3106 3104 (English) 3755 6811 (Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai) 3755 6822 (Hindi and Nepali) 3755 6833 (Punjabi and Urdu) Website: www.hkcs.org/en	• Interpretation and translation services • Provision of counselling, guidance and referral services

Mission for Migrant Workers	Telephone: 2522 8264 Website: www.migrants.net	• Assistance in pursuing employment claims and any other entitlements under the employment contract and labour laws at LD and courts • Provision of legal advice to FDHs
PathFinders 	Telephone: 5190 4886 Website: www.pathfinders.org.hk/public	• Assistance to pregnant migrant mothers in distress and their Hong Kong-born children, including social welfare, shelter and supplies, health care, access to justice, etc. • Conducting training workshops on tackling love scams, prevention of unplanned pregnancy and maternity protection
RainLily	Telephone: 2375 5322 Website: www.rainlily.org.hk/eng	• The crisis centre provides 24-hour one-stop service to victim-survivors of sexual violence • Provision of free immediate crisis support, counselling, sexual transmittable infections screening and preventive treatment, legal information, and judicial procedures accompaniment support
The Hong Kong Bayanihan Kennedy Town Centre	Telephone: 2817 8928 Website: www.facebook.com/hkbktc	• Conducting courses on culinary arts, sewing and design, computer application, etc. • Provision of facilities to FDHs such as auditorium, classrooms, library, music room, cinema, photocopying machines and telephones for both local and long-distance calls

Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (CEASE Crisis Centre)	Telephone: 18281 (24-hour hotline) Website: ceasecrisis.tungwahcsd.org/document/pamphlet_eng.pdf	• Crisis intervention and support services for victims of sexual violence and individuals/families encountering domestic violence or other family crises • Provision of support services including 24-hour hotline service, outreaching service and short-term accommodation service
YMCA of Hong Kong (Overseas Domestic Workers Programme)	Telephone: 2268 7736 Website: www.ymcahk.org.hk/member/programmes.php?lang=en	• Conducting training courses and interest classes (e.g. computer, elderly care, baby care, languages, cooking, etc.)

Tips

The Race Relations Unit of the Home Affairs Department has published "Your Guide to Services in Hong Kong" (www.had.gov.hk/rru/english/home) for the reference of FDHs/ethnic minorities residing in Hong Kong so as to enable them to understand the daily life in Hong Kong and the various support services available in society. The Guide is available in seven languages, namely English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu. Copies can be obtained free of charge on a first-come-first-served basis from the Home Affairs Enquiry Centres, LD, relevant consulates in Hong Kong and community organisations. Copies of the guide are also distributed to non-Chinese new arrivals at the Hong Kong International Airport.

Part 10

Meaningful Story

Meaningful Story

Sharing by a group of Cambodian domestic helpers

"Welcome to Hong Kong"

Hong Kong is thankful to our FDHs for helping and taking care of local families. We welcome domestic helpers of different nationalities. Following the relaxation of the visa requirement on Cambodian nationals in March 2017, the first batch of Cambodian domestic helpers arrived in Hong Kong at the end of 2017.

Like their peers from other countries, Cambodian domestic helpers have left their families and friends to work in Hong Kong. Apart from overcoming difficulties in adapting to the new working environment and getting along with employers and their families, they may also be homesick. Six newcomers from Cambodia, Ms CHHORN Kimrortha (Kimrortha), Ms MAO Sreymom (Sreymom), Ms MECH Narorn (Narorn), Ms SIM Sineth (Sineth), Ms SOK Saphan (Saphan) and Ms SOK Sophea (Sophea) are delighted to share their life as domestic helpers in Hong Kong.

Working as a domestic helper in Hong Kong

What drove Kimrortha to come and work in Hong Kong is the salary. Compared with monthly earnings of US$100 as a general worker in Cambodia, she can earn around US$580 as an FDH here, which is almost six times her original salary. "I have to provide financial support to my parents and children. Their living conditions in Cambodia have improved a lot since I came to work in Hong Kong. I want to buy a big

house for my whole family to live together and have my own business of running a supermarket in Cambodia." Besides the competitive salary, she is attracted to Hong Kong because of the full and comprehensive employment protection, such as more paid holidays and better general labour rights compared with other places in Asia.

Sreymom said that "unlike the residential setting in Cambodia, most local families live in high-rise buildings and a domestic helper in Hong Kong is usually not required to handle labour work like gardening, maintenance and repair work, cleaning backyard, etc. The duties of an FDH here are mainly to take care of domestic chores, which are much lighter".

First impressions of Hong Kong

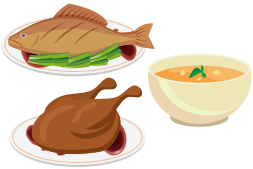
Saphan was very excited recalling her arrival in Hong Kong. Her first impression of Hong Kong was "modern and beautiful". "The airport is more advanced and bigger than that in Cambodia. Also, Hong Kong people are generally nice to foreigners. There was once when I got lost on the street, and the local people were willing to show me the way patiently." All the other interviewees agreed with Saphan and nodded enthusiastically. It seemed that they have settled in without much difficulty.

Sineth chipped in and told us her encounter when she came to this interview. "This is my first time to go to Kwun Tong from my employer's place. I am not familiar with the way and I asked three passersby for help. Luckily, they were all willing to help me." Though Sineth could not speak Cantonese very well at present, she believed that she could adapt to city life here quickly as Hong Kong people were generally helpful. She suggested that her peers "will find it enjoyable working and living in Hong Kong."

Coping with homesickness

However, the hardship of coping with homesickness is more difficult than imagined. Saphan is responsible for taking care of a child who is the same age as her son. She said, “When I take care of my employer’s child, I sometimes miss my son.” She would use instant messaging and make video calls with her son to establish bonds and witness his growth. “This is an effective way to ease homesickness and to keep in touch with my family in Cambodia. I can see their faces through the video calls.” She also mentioned that there were lots of free Wi-Fi hotspots in Hong Kong where she could stay in touch with her family free of charge during her leisure time.

Kimrortha shared that she sometimes felt lonely without her family around. She said that hanging out with friends during holidays was definitely an option to relieve homesickness. “It is easy and convenient to travel around Hong Kong. I meet my friends during holidays and I find it enjoyable to share my ups and downs with them”. She advised her peers to have a social life during holidays to get support and encouragement from friends.

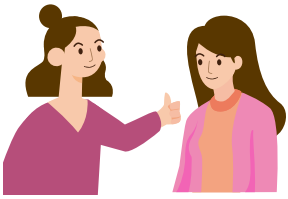


Narorn is working for an elderly couple and mainly helps them to prepare meals. She said, “I enjoy cooking very much. My employer taught me to cook Chinese dishes like traditional soup, steamed fish, soy sauce chicken, radish cake, etc., none of which I have tried before. Besides, they treat me like family and always invite me to have meals together. It is really exciting to try new dishes,

especially because they were made by myself. The taste is not bad ! My cooking skills have improved a lot ! I want to share the recipes with my family and friends when I go back to Cambodia." Narorn further commented that "life will be happier if you enjoy your work".

Being a dutiful domestic helper

It is never an easy task for an FDH to settle into his/her employer's family who may have different culture, living habits and dietary preferences. "How to be a dutiful helper" is a question one may ponder. The experience from the interviewees might give their peers some clues.



Kimrortha advised that, "First of all, being hard-working is a prerequisite. Apart from that, we always have to be thoughtful about the needs of our employers, and remember and follow their work instructions. Employers will appreciate our hard work if we are serious and have put in efforts in performing the duties." Satisfactory performance could undoubtedly help earn employers' trust and appreciation.

She further added, "When we are not certain about employers' instructions, we have to clarify with them immediately without hesitation, or ask them to repeat the instructions if necessary. Arguing with employers is never a solution, as it will just worsen the relationship. Moreover, trust is the key to a good relationship. Once an employer loses his/her trust in you, neither party will feel good or happy."

Sophea shared her experience that, "There was one time when my employer reminded me to hand-wash her expensive new dress. However, I forgot her washing instruction and put it into the washing machine. The dress was eventually damaged

and could not be worn again. I felt really sorry and confessed to my employer immediately. I learnt a lesson from this incident. From then on, I remember my employer's instructions well." Kimrortha supplemented, "If we make a mistake at work, we should not make excuses. We should apologise at once, learn the lesson and never repeat the mistake." With an honest heart and receptive mind, relationship with employers can be enhanced and improved.

Narorn commented that, "Understanding your employer's needs and being considerate are important. We have to think from the employer's perspective. For example, I respect my employer's dietary preferences and do not add much salt or oil when cooking." She described herself as a lucky girl because her employer treats her very well. "My employer treats me like her daughter. When we go out together, she sometimes buys me clothes and shoes. We also chat about nail painting and she sometimes invites me to try her nail paints ! Since I do not speak Cantonese or English very well at the moment, my employer provides me with the shopping list in Chinese so that I can do the grocery easily." She has got along with her employer very well as both parties respect each other, which is also essential in establishing a harmonious employment relationship.

Saphan suggested that FDHs should improve their language abilities to enhance their communication skills. "As my English and Cantonese were not good at first, I decided to learn English so that I could express myself better. I learnt English after work every day through an online channel by some Cambodians. I also tried to practise English in my daily life ! I can now communicate with my employer in more fluent English. Our relationship has improved as we understand each other better." With better English, Saphan also hoped that she could have a brighter future when returning to Cambodia.

It is the first time for the interviewees to come to Hong Kong to work as FDHs, and it was not an easy decision to make. Though it was difficult to adapt to the new working life at the beginning, they are all confident and positive after working for several months. From their smiling faces, we know they made the right decision to work as FDHs in Hong Kong.

Sineth (left) and Kimrortha (right) from the first batch of Cambodian domestic helpers share their successful experience and provide useful tips to their peers.
(The interviewees consented to publishing this photo.)

Part 11

Useful References

Useful References

11.1 Contact numbers and relevant websites

Government Departments/Statutory Bodies			
Organisations	**Scopes**	**Telephones**	**Websites/emails**
Labour Department	Rights of FDHs and labour legislation	2157 9537 (FDH hotline, handled by "1823")	www.labour.gov.hk/eng/news FDH Portal www.fdh.labour.gov.hk Dedicated Email Account fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk
	Regulation of EAs	2115 3667	EA Portal www.eaa.labour.gov.hk/en/home.html
	Occupational safety & health	2559 2297	www.labour.gov.hk/eng/osh
Immigration Department	Visa related matters	2824 6111	www.immd.gov.hk/eng
Hong Kong Police Force	Emergency assistance	999	www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en
Fire Services Department	Fire prevention and protection	2723 8787	www.hkfsd.gov.hk/eng
Social Welfare Department	Social welfare	2343 2255	www.swd.gov.hk/en/index
Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health	Information on MMR vaccination	2125 2235	www.chp.gov.hk/en
	Information on TB and contact information of the Tuberculosis and Chest Service of the Public Health Services Branch	2572 6024	www.info.gov.hk/tb_chest/eindex.htm

Department of Health	Family health	2112 9900 (24-hour information hotline)	www.fhs.gov.hk/english
	AIDS and sexually transmitted infections	2780 2211	www.27802211.com/en
Hospital Authority	Health and medical services	2300 6555	www3.ha.org.hk/em
Occupational Safety and Health Council	Safety courses for FDHs	2311 3322	www.oshc.org.hk/eng
Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data	Personal data privacy	2827 2827	www.pcpd.org.hk
Equal Opportunities Commission	Information on anti-discrimination issues	2511 8211	www.eoc.org.hk
Customs and Excise Department	Reporting false and misleading information in respect of services provided by EAs in the course of trade	2815 7711	www.customs.gov.hk/en/home/index.html
Consumer Council	Reporting unfair deals and trade practices of EAs	2929 2222	www.consumer.org.hk/ws_en

Consulates in Hong Kong *(arranged in alphabetical order)*

Countries	Telephones	Websites/emails
Bangladesh	2827 4278	www.bangladeshconsulate.hk
Cambodia	2546 0718	cacghk@netvigator.com camcg.hk@mfaic.gov.kh
India	3970 9900	www.cgihk.gov.in
Indonesia	3651 0200	www.kemlu.go.id/hongkong
Myanmar	2845 0810	myanmar.e-consulate.org

Nepal	2369 7813	hkg.nepalconsulate.gov.np
Pakistan	2827 0681	www.pakistan.hk
Philippines	2823 8501	hongkongpcg.dfa.gov.ph
Sri Lanka	2581 4111	peter.cheng@wisedragon.hk
Thailand	2521 6481	www.thai-consulate.org.hk

Non-governmental Organisations

Organisations	Scopes	Telephones	Websites/emails
Caritas Hong Kong (Caritas Asian Migrant Workers Social Service Project)	Enquiry and referral services	2977 5997 SMS/WhatsApp: 5497 2899	cd.caritas.org.hk/amp_eng.htm
Christian Action (Centre for Migrant Domestic Workers)	Provision of shelter and other supports to FDHs, including translation and advisory services	2739 6193 (Tsim Sha Tsui Centre) 2362 1922 (To Kwa Wan Centre)	www.christian-action.org.hk/en
Enrich HK	Financial and empowerment education	2386 5811	www.enrichhk.org
HELP for Domestic Workers	Assistance in pursuing entitlements under the employment contract and labour laws	2523 4020 WhatsApp: 5618 0689 WhatsApp (Bahasa Indonesia): 5493 4660	www.helpfordomesticworkers.org/en
Hong Kong Christian Service – Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents	Interpretation and translation services, counselling, guidance and referral services	3106 3104 (English) 3755 6811 (Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog and Thai) 3755 6822 (Hindi and Nepali) 3755 6833 (Punjabi and Urdu)	www.hkcs.org/en

Mission for Migrant Workers	Assistance in pursuing entitlements under the employment contract and labour laws	2522 8264	www.migrants.net
PathFinders	Assistance to pregnant migrant mothers in distress and their Hong Kong-born children	5190 4886	www.pathfinders.org.hk/public
RainLily	Assistance in sexual violence related issues	2375 5322	www.rainlily.org.hk/eng
The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong	Information and services related to contraceptive methods, emergency contraception and unplanned pregnancy	2572 2222	www.famplan.org.hk/en
The Hong Kong Bayanihan Kennedy Town Centre	Provision of training courses and facilities	2817 8928	www.facebook.com/hkbktc
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (CEASE Crisis Centre)	Assistance in sexual violence and domestic violence related issues	18281 (24-hour hotline)	ceasecrisis.tungwahcsd.org/document/pamphlet_eng.pdf
YMCA of Hong Kong (Overseas Domestic Workers Programme)	Training courses and interest classes	2268 7736	www.ymcahk.org.hk/member/programmes.php?lang=en

11.2 Office of the Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department

Office	Address
Hong Kong	
Hong Kong East	12/F, 14 Taikoo Wan Road, Taikoo Shing, Hong Kong
Hong Kong West	3/F, Western Magistracy Building, 2A Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong
Kowloon	
Kowloon East	UGF, Trade and Industry Tower, 3 Concorde Road, Kowloon
Kowloon West	Room 1009, 10/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon
Kowloon South	2/F, Mongkok Government Offices, 30 Luen Wan Street, Mongkok, Kowloon
Kwun Tong	Units 801-806, 8/F, Tower 1, Millennium City 1, 388 Kwun Tong Road, Kwun Tong, Kowloon
New Territories	
Tsuen Wan	5/F, Tsuen Wan Government Offices, 38 Sai Lau Kok Road, Tsuen Wan, New Territories
Kwai Chung	6/F, Kwai Hing Government Offices, 166-174 Hing Fong Road, Kwai Chung, New Territories
Tuen Mun	Unit 2, East Wing, 22/F, Tuen Mun Central Square, 22 Hoi Wing Road, Tuen Mun, New Territories
Shatin & Tai Po	Rooms 304-313, 3/F, Sha Tin Government Offices, 1 Sheung Wo Che Road, Sha Tin, New Territories

Service hours: Monday to Friday (except public holidays)
(9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.)

Please visit the Labour Department's website (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/tele/lr1.htm) or scan the QR code for the latest address:

(Offices of the Labour Relations Division)

11.3 Office of the Employees' Compensation Division of the Labour Department

Office	Address
Work Injury Cases	
Submit relevant forms for reporting work injury cases or prescribed occupational disease cases:	
Employees' Compensation Division Operations – Central Processing Team	Room 1007, 10/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon
Enquiries on reported work injury cases or prescribed occupational disease cases:	
Employees' Compensation Division Operations – Team A	Room 1605, 16/F, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong
Employees' Compensation Division Operations – Team B	18/F, One Mong Kok Road Commercial Centre, 1 Mong Kok Road, Kowloon
Employees' Compensation Division Operations – Team C	6/F, Tsuen Wan Government Offices, 38 Sai Lau Kok Road, Tsuen Wan, New Territories
Employees' Compensation Division Operations – Team D	Rooms 05-06, 23/F, KOLOUR•Tsuen Wan I, 68 Chung On Street, Tsuen Wan, New Territories Room 239, 2/F, Shatin Government Offices, 1 Sheung Wo Che Road, Shatin, New Territories
Employees' Compensation Division Operations – Team E	18/F, One Mong Kok Road Commercial Centre, 1 Mong Kok Road, Kowloon
Fatal Cases	
Fatal Cases Office	Room 601, 6/F, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Service hours: Monday to Friday (except public holidays)
(9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.)

Please visit the Labour Department's website (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/tele/ec.htm) or scan the QR code for the latest address:

(Offices of the Employees' Compensation Division)

勞工處
Labour Department

2/2023