

**There are over 300,000 migrant domestic workers employed in Malaysian households. These are women who have travelled far from home to make a living for themselves and their families.**

As an employer it is your responsibility to provide your domestic worker with a fair, safe and respectful workplace.

**Domestic workers are workers who deserve to be treated the same as every other Malaysian worker.**

Unfortunately there are frequent cases of abuse and exploitation of domestic workers.

Some examples of abuse include physical abuse, sexual harassment, rape, restricting her movement by confining her to the house, forcing her to work extremely long hours with no day off, not allowing her access to medical treatment or to communicate with her family and not paying her wages on time or at all.

Domestic workers make a significant contribution to the lives of Malaysian families. They care for children and the elderly, prepare meals and do housework. They contribute their skills and labour. They deserve a fair and safe working environment.



**Do you know a domestic worker who needs help?**

WAO: 03 7956 3488  
Tenaganita Hotline: 012 335 0512  
WCC, Penang: 04 228 0342  
Talian Nur: 15999

# Is your home a fair and safe place?

Most people would respond to this question with a "yes!" But if you employ a domestic worker in your home, think again – is your home a fair and safe place for her?

**This brochure provides advice to employers of domestic workers on making their home a fair and safe place.**



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## What can I do to make my house a fair and safe place for a domestic worker?

- **Ensure all members of your household treat her with dignity and respect.** All human beings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Domestic workers are no exception.
- **Pay her salary – the right amount and on time.** The domestic worker should never be working without pay. As an employer, you must pay her the full wage under her contract without delay. The Immigration Department stipulates that wages must be paid in the last week of each month.
- **Ensure she is given appropriate tasks.** You should make the duties of the domestic worker clear from the beginning of her employment. Domestic workers are employed to do domestic work such as cleaning, cooking, caring for children and washing. By law, you are not allowed to make her work for any business or trade you conduct.
- **Set fair working hours.** A domestic worker must never be forced to work long hours every day without a break.
- **The domestic worker must have sufficient rest each day.** You must ensure that she is able to take reasonable breaks throughout each day and have the opportunity to get at least 8 hours of sleep each night.
- **Your domestic worker has the right to at least one day off each week.** Everybody needs a break from work to allow time to recharge and de-stress. A day off will give her the opportunity to contact her family and friends back in her home country, get some exercise and relax.
- **Provide her with suitable accommodation and proper food.** You must provide the domestic worker with:
  - Nutritious food, consisting of 3 main meals a day and drinks and snacks,
  - Proper bedding (a bed with a mattress, pillows and blankets) and a fan,
  - Towels, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, sanitary items, shampoo and conditioner, and
  - A private place to sleep – it is inappropriate to make her sleep in the kitchen or living room or to share a room with a male adult.
- **Acknowledge difficulties in moving to Malaysia and help her to get settled in your home.** New domestic workers may be unfamiliar with Malaysia. There may be some difficulties in settling in, especially for workers from rural areas. You should take the time to welcome her, train her and introduce her to how your family operates and the Malaysian way of life. Integrate her into your family activities and try to understand her background. She will feel more comfortable in your house.
- **Learn to communicate with each other.** In order to have a productive and rewarding relationship with the domestic worker it is essential that you learn to communicate with her. At the start of her employment be patient and tolerant.
  - Make your expectations clear,
  - Let her know how she can raise a concern with you, and
  - Establish how you will give her feedback on her work.
- **Give her freedom to practice her religion.** Take the time to understand the domestic worker's religious beliefs. They may be different to religious customs you are used to. She must be able to observe her religious customs and holidays.

- **Do not keep her passport.** The domestic worker must remain in possession of her own identification documents.
- **Provide medical care to her.** The Immigration Department requires you to bear the cost of any medical treatment she requires.
- **Encourage her to have regular contact with her family and friends.** It is common for domestic workers to experience feelings of home-sickness, isolation and loneliness. You may want to buy her a phone card so that she can easily call home.
- **Ensure she is never verbally, physically or sexually abused by anyone in your household.** Domestic workers have a right to be safe and treated with respect. You should never hit, threaten, or say degrading words to her. It is a serious offence to abuse a domestic worker verbally, physically or sexually. The penalties are severe and it is inhumane to allow these practices to occur in your household.

**A DOMESTIC WORKER  
IS NOT A SLAVE**