

Practical Resources For First-Time MDW Employers

Complementary resources to the MOM Handy Guide



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide has been developed by We Are Caring, as a part of the Online Employers' Orientation Programme.

Written by Marie Capdouze, General Manager at We Are Caring, it features comprehensive resources based on our experience with MDW-employer relationships as a leading employment agency - taking feedback from both household employers and MDWs.

These resources are designed to complement the MOM Employer Handy Guide, with practical tips to facilitate your hiring journey and onboarding of your MDW. It reflects input and feedback from our experience as a leading employment agency - taking feedback from both household employers and MDWs.

For more information, visit www.wearecaring.com.

Practical Resources for First Time MDW Employers
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Cost Calculator - Employing an MDW

Do take a moment to consider if you will be able to provide for the following financial costs involved with employing a domestic worker.

Apart from the levy and your MDW's salary, you must provide and pay for her upkeep and maintenance including medical treatment, accommodation and food.

The cost of her return air ticket is also to be borne by the employer.

Monthly	01	SALARY	\$---	
	02	LEVY	\$300 Normal	\$60 Concessionary
	03	LIVING EXPENSES	\$200 - \$250 Food, transportation, utilities	
Every 6 Months	04	MEDICAL EXAMINATION	\$30 - \$40	
Every 2 Years	05	HOME LEAVE	\$100 - \$300 + 2 weeks of paid leave	

Tips and Considerations when Interviewing

The interview questions you ask should help you figure out if the prospective domestic worker is a **good fit for your family** and if she has the **relevant skills** for the duties she will primarily be performing. It is advisable that you engage one with prior experience in these respective areas.

Be sure to clarify with your domestic worker (and the employment agency if applicable) what her past working experiences have been, and if she is comfortable working within your requirements.

Which duties are the priority for my household?

- ☐ Housekeeping skills
- ☐ Cooking skills
- ☐ Infant Care
- ☐ Child Care
- ☐ Elderly Care
- ☐ Interacting with and taking care of pets

It is critical to assess if she can meet your key priorities. When interviewing a potential domestic worker, we also recommend that you consider the following key questions **beyond the general scope of duties** that are key to a successful future employer-MDW relationship.

1. Management Style in Prior Employment

Which management style will fit my needs?

- ☐ Independent MDW
- ☐ MDW follows specific guidelines

- Tell me what your daily work schedule is like?
 - The goal is to understand whether she is currently autonomous or prefers to follow guidelines (ie. making groceries list, planning weekly menus, etc)
- What did you like or did not like about your last employment?
- Why are you leaving your current employer?
- Can your current employer give a reference over the phone?

2. Practical & Emotional Skills

Which practical or emotional skills are key to the scope of work?

- Do you know how to use a map on your phone? Translation tool on your phone?
- Can you use a computer?
- How do you make sure you de-stress?
- How are you adjusting to living in Singapore while away from your family?

3. Future plans & life projects

Many domestic workers engage in **continued education, are active in church or mentor other MDWs through NGOs.**

These are indicators of being proactive about one's future and taking responsibility.

- What are your activities on your off-days?
- Are you active with religious groups or local charities? Are you taking classes?
- How long do you plan on working in Singapore?
- What are your goals for the future?

How To Make an Offer

In terms of making an offer, it is always good to formally discuss the following with the prospective domestic worker:

- What is the agreed salary?
- What is the off day arrangement? Are all public holidays off?
- If there is a food allowance:
 - if yes: usually \$40/50 a week and the domestic worker will exclusively buy her own food
 - if not: the domestic worker would be able to access your fridge/pantry and add some items for herself when she buys groceries.

Additional points to consider when making an offer:

- Discuss home leave duration and recurrence (whether paid or unpaid)
- Discuss curfew if any
- Discuss mobile phone policy if any
- When are you available to start working? Make sure your timelines are aligned
- Review of a sample schedule for your MDW. This weekly schedule should provide an understanding of what happens on each day of the week.

Onboarding - Getting Your MDW Started

Help your MDW to properly get familiarised in your household by going through the checklist below:

Orientation Checklist

☐ **JOB SCOPE**

Go through the job duties together, and daily/weekly schedule if applicable (see sample daily routine below)

☐ **SAFETY**

Go through the safety precautions regarding window cleaning and hanging laundry

☐ **HYGIENE EXPECTATIONS**

When preparing the food
Cleanliness inside the house

☐ **EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS**

Salary, allowances and mode of payment
Rest days

☐ **IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES**

Ensure your MDW has access to the house keys
Ensure your MDW knows where to get help and has access to key emergency contacts

- Your mobile number
- Contacts of family members in case of emergency
- Police
- Ambulance
- Fire station

☐ **WORK PASS CONDITIONS**

Your MDW can only work at the address stated on her work permit
Ensure she understands she can only perform domestic duties for your household

Sample Daily Timetable

Providing a domestic helper's schedule can help set expectations, particularly at the start of the working relationship. This is a sample daily routine plan, as seen in your Employers' Orientation Programme, that can be adjusted to fit your household needs.

	MONDAY
06:00 - 08:00	Prepare / Serve / Clear up breakfast
08:00	Breakfast break
09:00 - 11:00	House cleaning and laundry
11:00 - 12:30	Prepare / Serve / Clear up lunch
12:30	Lunch break
13:15 - 15:30	Ironing
15:30	Afternoon break
16:15 - 18:00	Pick daughter from preschool
18:00	Prepare / Serve / Clear up dinner
	End of work day - Dinner / Personal time / Bedtime

What To Provide In The House

You must bear the costs of your MDW's upkeep and maintenance such as food, lodging and medical expenses. Such costs should not be deducted from her salary.

Adequate Accommodation and Basic Amenities

You should provide for your MDW's basic needs such as a bed or mattress, a blanket, towels and bathroom amenities.

When your MDW buys groceries for you she can simply highlight on the receipt the purchased items. You can otherwise give an allowance solely for toiletries.

Adequate Rest

Plan your MDW's daily routine, taking into consideration the time and effort required to complete her chores.

Ensure that your MDW has sufficient rest, with a recommended **8 hours of continuous rest**.

Transportation Allowance

If your MDW takes the bus to bring children to different activities or to buy your groceries, you may want to provide a top-up for her transportation as well.

Adequate Food

Your MDW needs adequate food so that she has the energy to perform her household chores.

An example of a day's food intake for a female engaged in moderate activity is as follows:

- **Breakfast:** 4 slices of bread with spread.
- **Lunch:** 1 bowl of rice + three-quarter cup of cooked vegetables + palm-sized amount of meat (fish/poultry/beef/lamb) + fruit
- **Dinner:** 1 bowl of rice + three-quarter cup of cooked vegetables + palm-sized amount of meat (fish/poultry/beef/lamb) + fruit

Many domestic workers experience hunger or even malnourishment, not because an employer is intentionally withholding sustenance, but because the worker does not have a **clear understanding of what household food they are allowed to eat.**

Feel free to save more expensive items you do not wish for her to use, but communicate and establish clearly what your MDW is allowed to eat.

Tips For Healthy Working Relationship & Management

You must ensure that your MDW is not ill-treated, exploited or neglected. As MDWs work and live with their employers, they can be more vulnerable to abuse.

First Days & Transition Period

Expect a transition period for your employee (even an experienced domestic helper) to learn new skills and acclimatise to your household.

Conflicts may arise because your MDW is exhausted or overworked. Ensure her needs are met from the very first day by **providing sufficient food and rest daily**.

Set Clear Expectations

Articulate clearly your expectations (in writing if needed) including task schedules and interaction with your family (including child discipline).

If there are any special instructions or tasks, list them clearly.

Establish Open Communication

It takes commitment to **build a long-term relationship** based on trust and openness.

Communication and not making assumptions is key to a successful work relationship. Take the time and effort to discuss with your domestic worker any issues or questions on work expectations and the household rules.

Language Barrier

Remember that your domestic worker may not be accustomed to conversing in your preferred language.

Be patient in your communication with her and **provide sufficient time to adapt.**

Compliment Your MDW

As with any employment relationship, **rewards and recognition** are part of motivation for good performance.

Provide constructive job performance feedback regularly.

Employment contract between the employer and the migrant domestic worker (MDW)

Particulars of Parties

This Employment Contract is made between:

Employer's name:

Residential address:

And

MDW's name:

Work permit number:

Passport Number:

I. Employment Period and Workplace

1. The MDW shall be employed by the Employer as a domestic worker for a period specified in the MDW's work permit.
2. The MDW shall work and reside only in the Employer's residence as specified in the MDW's work permit.

II. Responsibilities of the MDW

1. The MDW shall undertake to perform her work diligently and honestly at all times.
2. The MDW shall not take up, or be required by the Employer to take up, any other employment with any other person(s).

III. Remuneration and Benefits

1. The Employer shall pay the MDW wages of SGD _____ per month.
2. The salary shall be paid on the last day of every month.

3. The salary will be paid by crediting the MDW's bank account or by cash. If the salary is paid by cash, the MDW shall acknowledge the amount received by signing the Table of Salary Payment (Annex B) as proof of payment.

5. The Employer shall provide the MDW with suitable accommodation in accordance with MOM's guidelines, with a reasonable amount of privacy.

6. Please select the room arrangement:

- ☐ Separate room
☐ Share a room with _____(please specify)

7. The Employer shall provide at least three adequate meals a day to the MDW, over and above the salary paid.

8. The Employer shall provide the MDW with at least 8 hours of continuous rest daily (except for occasional special-care cases), with reasonable rest periods during working hours.

9. The MDW shall be entitled to a weekly rest day as required by MOM.¹ The rest day shall be mutually agreed. If the rest day was not taken, due to occasional special needs, another day should be chosen as a rest day or it should be compensated according to MOM regulations.

The helper is also entitled to:

- ☐ All public holidays off
____ public holidays off (*specify number of days*).

10. Should both parties (Employer and MDW) agree to extend this contract, the MDW shall be entitled to 14 days of paid home leave (inclusive of a return ticket to _____).

11. If the MDW does not wish to utilise her leave as stated in clause 10, the Employer shall pay the MDW a lump sum equivalent to the return ticket to _____.

12. In the event that the MDW falls ill or suffers personal injury during the period of employment, except for the period the MDW leaves Singapore of her own volition and for her own personal purposes, the Employer shall bear all the necessary treatment costs, including medical consultation, medicine, hospitalisation and others.

13. External communications, such as access to the house keys, a house phone or mobile phone, shall be made available for the MDW and the employer must allow the MDW seek the advice/help of the relevant bodies/authorities such as the Employment Agency, Ministry of Manpower etc at all times.

¹Any migrant domestic worker (MDW) serving in Singapore is entitled to a weekly rest day in case her Work Permit was issued or renewed after 1 January 2013.

14. The employer shall provide safe working conditions for the MDW at all times.

IV. Termination

1. Either party may terminate this Contract by giving a _____ weeks notice.²

2. Either party may terminate the Contract without notice if either party is in breach of the work permit condition(s).

3. In cases where the employer decides to terminate the Contract under any circumstances, the employer should ensure the MDW's proper upkeep until she is repatriated or transferred to another employer, whichever is applicable.

4. The employer shall be responsible to bear the cost of repatriation of the MDW at all times.

5. Upon termination or expiry of the contract, the Employer shall bear the cost of repatriating the MDW back to _____ (nearest airport to her town of origin).

6. Should both parties agree to renew this employment relationship, a new employment contract shall be signed by both the employer and the MDW.

V. Others

1. Any substantial variation or addition to the terms of this Contract shall be deemed void unless made with the consent of both parties to the Contract and a witness through signatories.

2. Any dispute arising from this Contract shall be referred to the employment agency (if any) which will provide avenues for resolution. If it cannot be settled, the dispute can be referred at the election of either party to an alternative dispute resolution mechanism..

3. In the case whereby any term of the contract contradicts the existing Work Permit conditions or any Singapore government regulations, the latter two shall supersede.

² Recommended four weeks

Employer's Declaration

I have read and understood the contents of this Contract, and hereby agree to abide by it.

The Employer's Signature:

Migrant Domestic Worker's Declaration

I have read and understood the contents of this Contract, and hereby agree to abide by it.

The MDW's Signature:

Annex A - Job Scope Sheet for Migrant Domestic Worker

Employer Name :

NRIC/FIN : SXXXXX206B

MDW Name :

Passport No.:

Number of persons in household of Employer's family:

- ☐adults
- ☐teenagers aged 13 to 18
- ☐children aged 5 to 12
- ☐children aged between 3 to 5
- ☐infants/babies below 3
- ☐person(s) requiring constant care and attention (excluding babies)

The MDW shall be required to perform domestic duties as follows (to tick where applicable):

- ☐Household chores, including groceries
- ☐Cooking
- ☐Looking after aged person(s) in the household.
- ☐Baby-sitting
- ☐Child-minding
- ☐Taking care of dog, cat or other pet(s)

House type:

- ☐Landed Property
- ☐Condominium
- ☐HDB _____-Room Flat (specify number of rooms)
- ☐Others _____ (specify)

Number of bedrooms (including the MDW's room) in the house: _____.

Annex B - Table of Salary Payment (to be signed if salary is paid by cash)

Employer's name:

MDW's name: : salary of \$_____ due every last day of every month

	Month / year	Date of payment	MDW's Signature
1 (pro-rated)			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			

Should any agency be involved, fees should not exceed 1 month's salary for each year of the period of validity of the MDW's work permit, subject to a maximum of 2 months' salary of the MDW.

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