

Executive Summary

Employees in Singapore are governed by the Employment Act (1968), providing basic terms and conditions at work, like annual leave and statutory protection against wrongful dismissals. Part IV of the Employment Act (1968) provides rest days, hours of work and other conditions of service for a specific group of employees earning a specific salary range. Underpinned by Employment of Foreign Manpower (Work Passes) Regulations (2012), migrant domestic workers (MDWs) are entitled to 1 rest day per week, compensation for work during rest days, and a minimum of 1 rest day each month. MDWs are required to be given adequate food and medical care, accommodation and safe working conditions. Salary guidelines are provided to ensure timely payment, and employers are not allowed to gain possession of MDW's belongings nor ill-treated or abused. A safety agreement must also be signed between the employment agency, the MDW and the employer to inform all parties of the mandated MDW safety practices (Ministry of Manpower, n.d.). Migrant and domestic workers in Singapore face significant challenges, including exploitation and abuse, discrimination and social stigma, and limited legal protection (International Labour Organization, 2020). Laws protecting workers' rights are lacking, and enforcement is challenging, leaving them vulnerable (Neo, 2015). Addressing these issues requires comprehensive measures to promote fair treatment. The Singapore government, through the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and NGOs like Transient Worker Count Too (TWC2), Migrant Worker Center (MWC), and Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME), provides guidelines and support for employer-worker relations (Employer's Guide: Foreign Domestic Worker, 2023), such as integrating workers into their families, seeking official departments for conflict resolutions and using contracts to prevent disruption. Other nations' protocols were investigated to understand their migrant domestic rights. Taiwan has mandatory training for migrants under the Regulations on the Permission and Administration of the Employment of Foreign Workers, Article 34-1 (Ministry of Labour, 2023). Indonesia, being the dominant contributor of domestic workers in Southeast Asia (Dewanto et al., 2022), have also recently accelerated the passing of the Domestic Worker Protection Bills (Setkab, 2023), which governs legal protection and wages of domestic workers. Australia's migrant workers are covered by the Fair Work Act under protocol guidelines for domestic workers, 9.2 (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.,) and eligible for the Skilled Migration Program (Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, n.d.). A study on public attitudes towards migrant workers was conducted by ILO and UN Women (2019), with results indicating a correlation between a higher frequency of interaction with migrant workers and higher support towards them (ILO and UN Women, 2019). Recommendations were given to improve the rights of migrants and domestic workers in Singapore, such as promoting migrant social integration and rights through training schools and improved city planning (ILO and UN Women, 2020). Campaigns conducted need to have a protective, rather than a prevention objective which is more effective in inciting behavioural change (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023), including the rights MDWs have, while also addressing the root of negative attitudes towards them (ILO and UN Women, 2020). Knowledge of prejudice and discrimination increases an individual's support towards groups experiencing them (Palmer et al., 2022). Declining attitudes towards domestic workers should also be addressed through increased interaction between them and their employers, and careful addressment of domestic workers, especially by the media must be done to prevent portraying them as servile (ILO and UN Women, 2020).

References

- Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (n.d.). *Private Domestic Workers*.
<https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/corporate/protocol-guidelines/9-private-domestic-workers>
- Australian Government Department of Home affairs (n.d.) *Skilled migration program - immigration and citizenship*.
<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/skilled-migration-program/what-we-do/legislative-instruments>
- Dewanto, R. K. P. A., Batongbacal, J., Kersten, R., & Kuik, C.-C. (2022). Indonesia gets the ball rolling on domestic worker rights. Lowy Institute.
<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/indonesia-gets-ball-rolling-domestic-worker-rights#:~:text=Each%20year%2C%20the%20country%20hires,contributor%20in%20the%20domestic%20sectors>
- Employer's guide: foreign domestic worker. (2023). Ministry of Manpower Singapore.
<https://www.mom.gov.sg/passages-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-domestic-worker/employers-guide>
- Harsono, N. (2023, May 8). *Bill to protect Indonesia's domestic workers won't cover 2 million of them*. The Japan Times.
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/05/08/asia-pacific/indonesia-new-bill-workers-unprotected/>
- ILO and UN Women. (2019). *Public Attitudes towards Migrant Workers in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and*

Thailand. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_732443.pdf

ILO and UN Women. (2020). *Research brief - international labour organization. Public attitudes towards migrant workers in Singapore.*

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/briefingnote/wcms_766633.pdf

ILO and UN Women. (2020). *Research brief - international labour organization. Public attitudes towards migrant workers in Singapore.*

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/briefingnote/wcms_766633.pdf

Ministerie van Algemene Zaken. (2023) *Impact of awareness raising campaigns on migrants/migrant communities. Report | Government.nl.*

<https://www.government.nl/topics/immigration-to-the-netherlands/documents/reports/2023/03/15/impact-of-awareness-raising-campaigns-on-migrants-migrant-communities>

Ministry of Labour. (2023, March 13). *Regulations on the permission and administration of the employment of Foreign Workers - Article Content - Laws & Regulations Database of the Republic of China (Taiwan).*

<https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=N0090027>

Ministry of Manpower (2012) *Employment of Foreign Manpower (Work Passes) Regulations.*

<https://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-domestic-worker/employers-guide/abuse-and-ill-treatment>

Ministry of Manpower. (n.d.) *Contracts and safety agreement for migrant domestic worker*.

<https://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-domestic-worker/employers-guide/contracts-and-safety-agreement>

NEO, J. L. (2015). Riots and rights: Law and exclusion in Singapore's migrant worker regime. *Asian Journal of Law and Society*, 2(1), 137–168. <https://doi.org/10.1017/als.2015.1>

Palmer, S. B., Filippou, A., Argyri, E. K., & Rutland, A. (2022). Minority-and majority-status bystander reactions to, and reasoning about, intergroup social exclusion. *Journal of experimental child psychology*, 214, 105290.

Setkab. (2023, January 18). *Gov't to accelerate the ratification of Domestic Workers' Protection bill*. <https://setkab.go.id/en/govt-to-accelerate-the-ratification-of-domestic-workers-protection-bill/>