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Employment of Foreign Manpower Act

The Employment of Foreign Manpower Act (EFMA) regulates the employment of foreign employees and protects their well-being. Find out what it covers and your key responsibilities as an employer under the Act.

What is the EFMA

The Employment of Foreign Manpower Act prescribes the responsibilities and obligations for employing foreign employees in Singapore.

It covers regulations of work passes and enforcement for:

- Offences
- Infringements

Who it covers

The EFMA covers employers of foreign employees and any person issued a work pass by the Ministry of Manpower. Work passes include Employment Pass, S Pass and Work Permit.



Key responsibilities

The EFMA outlines responsibilities relating to work passes, including application, medical insurance, levy, cancellation and repatriation. For specific requirements on the different types of work passes, see [Work Pass](#).


There are specific requirements covering the following areas for foreign employees who are **covered by the Employment Act**:

- [Salary](#)
- [Hours of work, overtime and rest days](#)
- [Public holidays](#)
- [Annual leave](#)
- [Sick leave](#)

You are encouraged to have a written [employment contract](#) with your foreign employees that covers these areas.

Note: For migrant domestic workers (MDWs), their well-being and entitlements are provided for under the EFMA. MDWs are not covered by the Employment Act. For guidelines on the well-being of MDWs, read the [rest days and well-being for MDWs](#).

Report a possible contravention

If you want to report a possible work pass contravention, you can [call our hotlines](#) or  [submit your feedback](#).

Penalties for common EFMA offences

The penalties for common offences under the EFMA are:

Offence	Penalty
Employing a foreign employee without a valid work pass	A fine of between \$5,000 and \$30,000, or imprisonment for up to 12 months, or both. For subsequent convictions , offenders face a mandatory imprisonment of between 1 month and 12 months and a fine between \$10,000 and \$30,000.
Contravening any condition of a work pass	A fine up to \$10,000, or imprisonment for up to 12 months, or both.
Making a false statement or providing false information in any application or renewal of a work pass	A fine up to \$20,000, or imprisonment for up to 2 years, or both.
Receiving money in connection with the employment of a foreign employee	A fine up to \$30,000, or imprisonment for up to 2 years, or both.
Obtaining a work pass for a foreign employee for a business that does not exist, or is not in operation or does not require the employment of the foreign employee	An imprisonment term of between 6 months and 2 years and possibly a fine not exceeding \$6,000. Offenders may also receive caning.

Infringements

The financial penalties for common infringements under the EFMA are:

Infringement	Penalty
Illegally deploying a foreign employee or domestic worker	A financial penalty of up to \$10,000.
Contravening any regulatory condition of a work pass	A financial penalty of up to \$10,000.
Deducting employment costs (e.g. levy) from foreign employee's salary	A financial penalty of up to \$20,000.
Making work pass applications based on CPF contributions to "phantom" workers	A financial penalty of up to \$20,000.

Note: Directions may also be issued to those responsible to correct the infringement. Failure to comply with Directions is an offence.



Those found to have committed an infringement will be issued a **Notice of Infringement** and given an opportunity to respond to the Commissioner for Foreign Manpower's findings.

The Commissioner for Foreign Manpower's final decision will be set out in a **Determination or Direction**.

If you disagree with the **Determination or Direction**, you may [make a review application to the Commissioner for Foreign Manpower](#), or [file an appeal to the Appeal Board](#).



Relevant legislation

For the full legislation, see the following:

- [Employment of Foreign Manpower Act \(Cap 91A\)](#) 
- [Employment of Foreign Manpower \(Work Passes\) Regulations – Conditions of Work Pass](#) 

Amendments

The EFMA was last amended in 2012. For a summary of the amendments, see the following:

- [Executive Summary of Amendments to the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act](#) 
- [Quick Info-guide on the Amendments to the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act](#) 

Related questions

How can I submit a review application to the Commissioner for Foreign Manpower, if I disagree with the Determination or Direction?

How can I file an appeal to the Appeal Board if I disagree with the Determination or Direction?

Who is the Appeal Board?

What are the fees payable in an appeal for infringements under EFMA?

What happens in an appeal for infringements under EFMA?

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