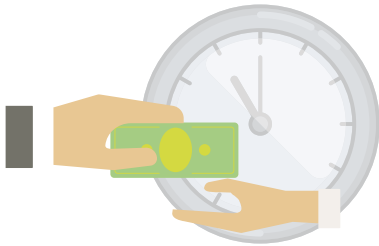


# INFORM

A Ministry of Manpower (MOM) publication specially for foreign domestic workers in Singapore

## You Must Get Your *Salary On Time*



There have been cases of salary disputes whereby FDWs were not paid their salaries. In some instances, the employer had helped to keep their FDW's salaries, but due to unforeseen circumstances, was unable to pay their FDW after accumulating many months of unpaid salaries.

You can prevent this from happening to you, by managing your own finances and seeking help early when you are not paid your salary.



### CASE 1

FDW Soe (not her real name) approached the Centre for Domestic Employees (CDE) when she stopped receiving her salary from her employer. According to Soe, her employer had not paid her salary since July 2015, and she was owed S\$10,200 in backdated salary. The CDE referred her to the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and when MOM approached Soe's employer, she explained that she was unable to pay Soe as her business was not doing well. However, upon MOM's intervention, Soe's employer returned the full sum of salary owed to her.



### CASE 2

Since June 2013, FDW Nora (not her real name) had never received her full monthly salary of S\$475 and was only paid between S\$55 to S\$200 monthly. Her employer had arranged to keep her salary and would only return it to her at the end of her contract. When Nora finally requested for her salary from her employer, she was owed S\$11,016 and her employer did not have the money to pay her. Nora reported to MOM and upon MOM's intervention, her employer returned S\$2,000. However, as she had failed to pay Nora her salary, the employer was charged in Court and sentenced to jail for five months.

## HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO AVOID FALLING INTO THE SAME SITUATION AS SOE AND NORA.

**1** You must be paid every month. Your employer has to pay you within 7 days of your last salary period (for example, if your pay day is 1st May, your employer should pay you by 7th May).

**2** You and your employer must keep a record of when and how much your employer has paid you.

**3** If you prefer to have your salary paid directly into a bank account, you can ask your employer to do so and he/she is required to agree.



**4** If your employer continues to delay paying your salary, you should:  
- Inform your Employment Agency; or  
- Call MOM FDW helpline (1800-339 5505) and report the case to MOM.

**5** You should not ask your employer to keep your salary.

**6** If your employer forgets or does not pay you, ask him/her politely and explain that your salary is due.



### SEEK HELP EARLY

Seek help early when you are not paid your salary. If you delay, the amount of owed salary increases, and your employer may not have the means to pay you even if necessary action is taken against him/her.

# Turning a *Stranger* into *Family*



Her capabilities and cooking have been such a blessing to our family and we will certainly appeal for Indra's extension for as long as we can. – Mdm Vera

**Pasgodayaye Gedara Indrani Fernando (Indra)**, an FDW from Sri Lanka, was crowned the winner of the Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) of the Year Award 2016, organised by the Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Training (FAST).

Indra has adapted very well to the Singaporean way of life after working here for more than two decades. Today, she enjoys a good relationship with her employer Mdm Vera Vijaya Balakrishnan, and to the family, she is more than just their domestic worker.

Indra left her hometown to come to Singapore in 1994. It was difficult when

she first started working for Mdm Vera and her family. She could not speak English and had communication issues. Indra also found it a challenge to adapt to living and working in a city.

However, Indra was determined to learn as quickly as she could. With guidance from Mdm Vera, she worked hard, picked up new and useful skills, and even learnt English. Today, she is not only able to speak English fluently, but is also able to cook Chinese, Peranakan and Indian dishes for the family!

Indra has been looking after Mdm Vera's three sons and dotes on them. In 2014, she took on the role of a caregiver to Mdm Vera's ailing parents-in-law. Indra would often

take them out for bus rides and to medical appointments. Mdm Vera was full of praises for Indra. **"Indra has morphed from a novice helper to an experienced nanny, cook and domestic helper to our family for the past 22 years,"** Mdm Vera gushed.

Mdm Vera added, **"Her capabilities and cooking have been such a blessing to our family and we will certainly appeal for Indra's extension for as long as we can."**

The INFORM team hopes Indra's story will be an inspiration to all FDWs who are still trying to adapt to life in Singapore. You can make your working experience here an enjoyable and fulfilling one too.



## Help Is Just A Call Away

CALL FAST AT 6509 1535

### **FAST's Befrienders' Service**

From time to time, the Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Training (FAST) comes across FDWs who need help with adjustment, relationship or financial issues. In 2013, FAST launched the Befrienders' Service and Humanitarian Assistance to help lonely and distressed FDWs by providing an avenue for them to socialise and make friends through group activities such as workshops, teambuilding and learning events.

To date, FAST has assisted close to 1,000 FDWs and many of these FDWs have since become mentors to fellow FDWs.

If you are a new FDW in Singapore and need help adjusting to working in Singapore, you can contact FAST at 6509 1535 to register to be part of the Befrienders' Service.

### **FAST's Free Mediation Service**

Since June 2016, FAST has been offering free mediation services to resolve issues and disputes between FDWs and their employers. Seven experienced mediators from the Community Mediation Center help to conduct the mediation sessions at FAST's clubhouse.

If you are unable to resolve any issues with your employer or your employment agency, call FAST for help. Please call 6509 1535 to book an appointment with any of the mediators.



## Do You Know

If your work permit was issued or renewed after **1 January 2013**, you are entitled to a weekly rest day. This rest day will give you a physical and mental break from work. Being well-rested and recharged also allows you to concentrate better and be a more productive helper when you are back at work. If you wish to have your rest day, approach your Employment Agency or employer to request for it.

However, if your employer requires your help on your rest day, and if you agree to do so,



**Your employer must pay you at least one day's wage for each rest day you work, or**



**Your employer can give you a replacement rest day within the same month.**

During your rest day, you can take part in constructive and meaningful activities such as educational courses and skills training.

**REMEMBER TO TAKE A BREAK AND RECHARGE!  
BE A HAPPY, HEALTHY  
AND PRODUCTIVE FDW!**

For more information on courses offered in Aidha, visit their website at [www.aidha.org](http://www.aidha.org) or contact them at +65 97894041 / +65 63415287.



## Turning a *Dream* into *Reality*

In 2007, Marilyn left her hometown of Maasin City, Philippines for the bustling city of Hong Kong to work for the Orchard family.

When the family moved to Singapore two years ago, they brought Marilyn with them. The shift to a new environment was easy for Marilyn because the Orchard family had always treated her as part of the family.

It was also through their encouragement that Marilyn enrolled for training classes at Aidha, which provides training programmes such as financial literacy and self-development skills for FDWs.



At Aidha, Marilyn also found mentors who guided and encouraged her to put her abilities to practice. When typhoon Haiyan wiped out sanitation and water services in her home province, Marilyn felt helpless especially when her sister and parents were hospitalised for drinking polluted water. This motivated her to want to improve the situation back home and she thought to herself, "One day, I will bring portable water to our community." It

sounded like a challenge, but Marilyn decided to put everything she had learned at Aidha to good use.

After months of hard work with the Municipal Water District and the Village Head, the water station was officially opened on 28 September 2016. Besides being a great personal achievement, it is also one of the most valuable services for the community.

Marilyn is very grateful for all the knowledge and skills that she acquired at Aidha. **"When I witness all that I've accomplished, it makes me feel alive,"** Marilyn reflected. She will be beaming with pride when she returns home next year.



# Seeking *Help* The *Right Way*

## REMEMBER:

Do not endanger your life under any circumstances or accuse your employer or household members of something they did not do.

Do not leave your employer's house without telling your employer, unless your employer abuses you, or in cases of emergencies such as a fire. Your problems will not be solved by doing so, and you may not be able to work in Singapore again.

Instead, follow the steps mentioned on the right to seek help the right way.



During your employment in Singapore, you may feel overwhelmed as there is a lot to learn. You may be unfamiliar with the chores that you have to perform and you may feel stressed or homesick.

## So what should you do?

- Speak to your employer, so that they know how you feel and can help you.
- If you and your employer are unable to find a resolution, contact your original EA, CDE, or MOM for help.

## If there is an emergency and you need to leave your employer's house to seek help, you must seek help responsibly;

- Do not leave your employer's children or elderly parents unattended, or leave the house appliances switched on (e.g. stove, iron).
- Once you leave the house, report to MOM immediately, or no later than the next working day, so that we can help to resolve your problem quickly. MOM will help you find a place to stay, if necessary.
- If you do not do so, you may be in breach of your work permit conditions and will be sent home. You may not be able to **return to work in Singapore**.
- If you are unable to leave your employer's home, call MOM or CDE for help.



**MOM's hotline: 1800 339 5505**

**CDE: 1800 2255 233 (24 hours hotline)**

# "Knowing U, Knowing Me"



## Bridging employment gaps between FDW and Employer

The Centre for Domestic Employees (CDE) was launched on 24 January 2016 to provide services to FDWs who need assistance. Working closely with various stakeholders such as employment agencies, the authorities and other like-minded organisations, CDE provides services like basic face-to-face counselling and mediation services for both FDWs and their employers on employment-related matters.

To promote mutual understanding and respect between FDWs and their employers, CDE will be producing a series of Handy Guides tri-annually. The first guide was launched in January 2017 and focused on common misconceptions and cultural differences, and common English phrases with translations to aid FDWs' communication with their employers. This series of guides will help manage the expectations that employers and FDWs may have of each other, especially in the initial stages of employment, thereby promoting healthy employer-employee relationships.

The pocket-sized guides are available in four bilingual versions – English-Bahasa Indonesia, English-Burmese, English-Tagalog and English-Tamil. FDWs can pick up a copy of the guides at CDE's office or download from their website at: <http://cde.org.sg/wps/portal/cde/home/learn/selfimprovement>.



# USEFUL CONTACTS

KEEP THE NUMBERS BELOW FOR HELP OR EMERGENCIES

## MOM FOREIGN DOMESTIC WORKER (FDW) HELPLINE



MINISTRY OF  
MANPOWER

**1800 339 5505**

This hotline is for FDWs seeking assistance and advice on well-being, salary and other employment-related matters

## OTHER EMERGENCIES



**Ambulance/  
Fire 995**



**Police 999**

## OTHER HELPLINES



**Centre for Domestic  
Employees**

**1800 CALL CDE  
1800 2255 233 (24 hours)**



**Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)  
1800 221 4444 (24 hours)**



**Association of Employment  
Agencies (Singapore)  
6836 2618**



**ACMI Hotline  
6801 7400**



**Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and  
Training (FAST)  
Toll-Free Hotline 1800 339 4357 (24 hours)**

## EMBASSIES AND HIGH COMMISSIONS



**Bangladesh  
6255 1579**



**India  
6737 6777**



**Indonesia  
6737 7422 / 9295 3964**



**Myanmar  
6735 1672**



**Philippines  
6737 3977**



**Thailand  
6737 2475 / 8421 0105**



**Cambodia  
6341 9785**



**Sri Lanka  
6254 4595**



For more information about CDE or any of their initiatives, please visit [www.cde.org.sg](http://www.cde.org.sg) or CDE's Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/cde.singapore>.



For assistance, you can call CDE's 24-hour toll-free hotline at **1800 2255 233** or visit them at **185A Thomson Road, Goldhill Centre (Level 2)**.