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How to get an OEC as a skilled worker

⚠️ This is a work in progress. guide will be updated as I find more information.

To leave the Philippines as a Filipino with work abroad, you need an OEC (Overseas Employment Certificate). It's very hard to get one.

This document outlines how you can get one as a skilled worker.

— Rico Sta. Cruz (@rstacruz)

Direct hire evaluation

To acquire an OEC, you need to first be evaluated by the Direct Hire department of the POEA offices in EDSA. To be evaluated, you'll need to submit all the documents in their checklist.

Dependency graph

```
graph RL
    OEC["OEC"]
    Overseas
    Employment
    Certificate["Certificate") EVAL1(Evaluation
    phase 1) EVAL2(Evaluation
    phase 2) PDOS[PDOS
    Pre-departure seminar] PEOS[PEOS
    Pre-employment seminar] CLEARANCE[POEA clearance] PEME[PEME
    Medical exam] click PEME "/medical_exam.html" "Medical exam" CONTRACT(Contract
    requirements) VERIFIED["Verified contract
    Verified by the
    POLO (PH Overseas
    Labor Office)"] click VERIFIED "/polo_verification.html" "Verified contract" REVISED["Revised contract
    With POEA-required
    revisions"] click REVISED "/employment_standards.html" "Revised contract" ODOCS(Documents) PASSPORT["Passport
    Valid for 6+ months"] VISA["Work visa
    or entry permit"] SDOCS(Supporting
    documents) ENDORSEMENT["POLO endorsement
    Endorsement letter"] STATEMENT["Notarized statement
    Describe how you got the job"] EMPLOYERID["Employer's ID
    Required for notarization"] JOBDOCS(Job-related
    documents) CV["Resume / CV"] PRC["PRC License
    (PH Regulatory Commission)"] DIPLOMA["Diploma
    and Transcript of Records"] PROFILE["Company profile
    and business license of employer"]
    OEC === EVAL2 EVAL2 --- PDOS EVAL2 --- PEOS EVAL2 --- CLEARANCE EVAL2 ---
    PEME EVAL2 === EVAL1 EVAL1 --- JOBDOCS EVAL1 --- ODOCS EVAL1 --- SDOCS EVAL1 --- CONTRACT
    subgraph
    Job documents
    JOBDOCS --- CV JOBDOCS --- PRC JOBDOCS --- DIPLOMA JOBDOCS --- PROFILE
    end
    subgraph
    Documents
    ODOCS --- PASSPORT ODOCS --- VISA
    end
    subgraph
    Supporting documents
    SDOCS --- ENDORSEMENT
    SDOCS --- STATEMENT STATEMENT --- EMPLOYERID
    end
    subgraph
    Contract requirements
    CONTRACT --- VERIFIED
    VERIFIED --- REVISED
    end
    style OEC fill:#fff,stroke:#3bd,stroke-width:9px
    style EVAL1 fill:#fff,stroke:#3bd,stroke-width:9px
    style EVAL2 fill:#fff,stroke:#3bd,stroke-width:9px
    style ODOCS fill:#fff,stroke:#3bd,stroke-width:2px
    style SDOCS fill:#fff,stroke:#3bd,stroke-width:2px
    style JOBDOCS fill:#fff,stroke:#3bd,stroke-width:2px
    style CONTRACT fill:#fff,stroke:#3bd,stroke-width:2px
```

May 2018 checklist

As of May 2018, this department issues a checklist of requirements. See: [Evaluation requirements](#). ⚠️ The list of requirements on the POEA website [is outdated](#).

Direct hire exception

Skilled workers are exempted from the "No Direct Hires" ban. When going to POEA offices, the direct hire department may assert that there's a ban on direct hires. Be aware that skilled workers are exempted since 2016, and this was reinforced in 2018.

SECTION 123. Ban on Direct Hires. — No employer shall directly hire an Overseas Filipino Worker for overseas employment.

SECTION 124. Exemption from the Ban on Direct Hiring. — The following are exempted from the ban on direct hiring:

- a. Members of the diplomatic corps;
- b. International organizations;
- c. Heads of state and government officials with the rank of at least deputy minister;
or
- d. Other employers as may be allowed by the Secretary of Labor and Employment, such as:
 1. Those provided in (a), (b) and (c) who bear a lesser rank, if endorsed by the POLO, or Head of Mission in the absence of the POLO;
 2. Professionals and skilled workers with duly executed/authenticated contracts containing terms and conditions over and above the standards set by the POEA. The number of professional and skilled Overseas Filipino Workers hired for the first time by the employer shall not exceed five (5). For the purpose of determining the number, workers hired as a group shall be counted as one; or
 3. Workers hired by a relative/family member who is a permanent resident of the host country.

Taken from the [Revised POEA Rules and Regulations of 2016](#), sections 123 to 124 (page 31). This exemption was also reinforced in [Memorandum Circular No. 08 of 2018](#), section I(d)(2).

Direct hire ban rules

Direct hires are not allowed by the POEA. See this excerpt from §123:

SECTION 123. Ban on Direct Hires. — No employer shall directly hire an Overseas Filipino Worker for overseas employment.

However, professionals and skilled workers are exempted from the direct hire ban. See this excerpt from §124(d)(2):

SECTION 124. Exemption from the Ban on Direct Hiring. — The following are exempted from the ban on direct hiring:

... d. Other employers as may be allowed by the Secretary of Labor and Employment, such as:

..... Professionals and skilled workers with duly executed/authenticated contracts containing terms and conditions over and above the standards set by the POEA. (...)

Contract requirements

You need a verified contract from POLO.

sequenceDiagram participant POEA participant Employee participant Employer participant POLO Employee-->Employer:
Negotiate on revisions Employer->>POLO: Mail contract for verification Note over POLO: Verify contract POLO->>Employer:
Mail verified contract back Employer->>Employee: Mail contract back to PH Employee->>POEA: Submit for evaluation

Employment standards

To get your contract verified by the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO), your employment contract should meet the "Employment Standards" defined by the POEA.

Insurance

You need "Life and repatriation insurance" (*TODO: citation needed*)

Contract provisions

SECTION 135. Minimum Provisions of Employment Contracts. — Consistent with welfare promotion thrusts of the Administration, the following shall be the minimum provisions in employment contracts for Overseas Filipino Workers:

- a. Complete name and address of the employer/company;
- b. Position and jobsite of the Overseas Filipino Worker;
- c. Basic monthly salary, including benefits and allowances and mode of payment. The salary shall not be lower than the prescribed minimum wage in the host country or prevailing minimum wage in the National Capital Region of the Philippines, whichever is higher;
- d. Food and accommodation or the monetary equivalent which shall be commensurate to the cost of living in the host country, or off-setting benefits;
- e. Commencement and duration of contract;
- f. Free transportation from and back to the point of hire, or off-setting benefits, and free inland transportation at the jobsite or off-setting benefits;
- g. Regular work hours and day off;
- h. Overtime pay for services rendered beyond the regular working hours, rest days and holidays;
- i. Vacation leave and sick leave for every year of service;
- j. Free emergency medical and dental treatment;
- k. Just/valid/authorized causes for termination of the contract or of the services of the workers, taking into consideration the customs, traditions, norms, mores, practices, company policies and the labor laws and social legislations of the host country;
- l. Settlement of disputes;
- m. Repatriation of worker in case of imminent danger due to war, calamity, and other analogous circumstances, at the expense of employer; and
- n. In case of worker's death/repatriation of Overseas Filipino Workers human remains and personal belongings, at the expense of the employer.

The "Employment Standards" are defined in the [Revised POEA Rules 2016](#), page 35, part V, section 135. It's also available in [Memorandum Circular No. 08, Series of 2018, Implementing Guidelines on the Registration of Direct-Hire OFWs](#), page 2, section II.

POLO verification

OEC and contract verification services are available through POLO (Philippine Overseas Labor Office) offices. Some countries may have this, and some may not.

sequenceDiagram participant POEA participant Employee participant Employer participant POLO Employee-->Employer: Negotiate on revisions Employer->>POLO: Mail contract for verification Note over POLO: Verify contract POLO->>Employer: Mail verified contract back Employer->>Employee: Mail contract back to PH Employee->>POEA: Submit for evaluation

Australia

There is a POLO (Philippine Overseas Labor Office) office in Canberra, Australia. This office services both Australia and New Zealand.

This office processes [OEC issuance and contract verifications](#). ⚠️ The information on their website is outdated; contact them below to get more updated requirements.

As of May 2018, their contact details are:

- Email: poloaustralia@philembassy.org.au
- Phone: +612 6273 8882

Singapore

See: [Singapore](#). Sorry, I don't have notes on this.

Pre-Employment Medical Examination (PEME)

You need a medical certificate as part of the requirements for obtaining an OEC certificate. This involves a physical examination. This is stipulated in [POEA Memorandum Circular No. 08 of 2018](#), section IV.

Exemptions

You don't need a medical exam if you had one as part of the process of applying for a visa. From section IV, paragraph 2:

A Direct-Hire OFW may be exempted from PEME if the worker has undergone a medical examination as a requirement for issuance of visa to the country of destination.

Health facilities

You must go to a "Medical Clinic accredited by the Department of Health (DOH)." See [Health facilities](#) document for a list of accredited facilities.

Checklist for direct hire evaluation

As of May 27th of 2018, the POEA has a new list of requirements for evaluation. This document is not available online; it's only available in the *Direct Hire* department of the POEA offices in EDSA.

Effective: May 27, 2018 Pre-Employment Service Office- Landbased Center

CHECKLIST OF REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATION OF DIRECT HIRE APPLICATION

PROFESSIONAL AND SKILLED WORKERS
(All documents to be submitted must be in duplicates)

WORKER _____
EMPLOYER _____
WORKSITE _____
POSITION _____

DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS

PHASE 1

	Remarks
<input type="checkbox"/> Passport with validity period of not less than six (6) months	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Valid Work Visa, Entry/Work Permit (whichever is applicable per country). If visa assurance or guarantee is issued by employer, the same should be noted/acknowledged by the Government or Immigration Office in the jobsite	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Employment Contract: ____ Original copy of Employment Contract or Offer of Employment ____ Verified by the Employment Contract or Offer of Employment ____ Authenticated by the Philippine Embassy/Consulate for countries with no POLO	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Company Profile, Business license/commercial registration of the employer	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> POLO Endorsement Letter addressed to the Administrator seeking exemption from the ban on direct-hiring	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional country-specific requirements: a. Canada- Labor Market Opinion (LMO), Labor Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) for and Canadian Letter and Employer's Certificate of Registration from ECON (Province of Saskatchewan Executive Council) or Saskatchewan Immigration Nominee Program (SINP) approval are required from workers to Saskatchewan in lieu of LMO b. USA- Labor Condition Application and Notice of Action c. Middle East and African countries- Contingency plan issued by the employer	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional documents to support job application: ____ Certificate of employment or Business Permit: If self-employed ____ Diploma and Transcript of Records (TOR) ____ NC II/PRC license ____ Curriculum Vitae/Resume	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Proof of certificate of insurance coverage covering at least the benefits provided under Section 37-A of RA 8042 as amended;	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Notarized Statement on how the workers secured his/her employment with attached photocopy of employer's passport/ID and contact details	_____

PHASE 2

<input type="checkbox"/> Valid Medical Certificate from DOH-accredited medical clinic authorized to conduct medical exam for OFWs	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar Certificate (PEOS)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) Certificate issued by OWWA	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> POEA Clearance (for employers under Section 124d of the POEA Revised Rules & Regulations)	_____

ACTION TAKEN:
____ Returned due to incomplete documents
____ Others _____

RECEIVING OFFICER:
PRINTED NAME & SIGNATURE _____
DATE: _____

RECEIVED BY:
PRINTED NAME & SIGNATURE _____
DATE: _____
QUEUE NO. _____

⚠ As of May 2018, this list is not available on the POEA website yet. The list of requirements on the POEA website is [outdated](#).

Memorandum Circular No. 08 of 2018

This Memorandum Circular details "Guidelines on the Registration of Direct-Hire Overseas Filipino Workers."

- [POEA Memorandum Circular No. 08 of 2018](#).

Things to note

- **Section I**

This lists of exemptions from the direct hire ban. §I(d)(2) in particular shows that skilled workers are exempted.

I. Coverage. No employer shall directly hire an overseas Filipino worker for overseas employment. The following, however, are exempted from the ban:

- a. Members of the diplomatic corps;
- b. International organizations;
- c. Heads of state and government officials with the rank of at least deputy minister; or
- d. Other employers as may be allowed by the Administration, such as:
 1. Those provided in a., b., and c. above who bear a lesser rank, if endorsed by the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO), or Head of Mission in the absence of the POLO;
 2. Professionals and skilled workers with duly executed verified/authenticated contracts containing terms and conditions over and above the standards set by the POEA. The number of professionals and skilled OFWs hired for the first time by the employer shall not exceed five (5). For the purpose of determining the number, workers hired as a group shall be counted as one; or
 3. Workers hired by a relative/family member who is a permanent resident of the host country, except domestic workers (live-in caregiver/care worker or household service workers).

- **Section II**

This covers the "employment standards" that must be met by your employment contract.

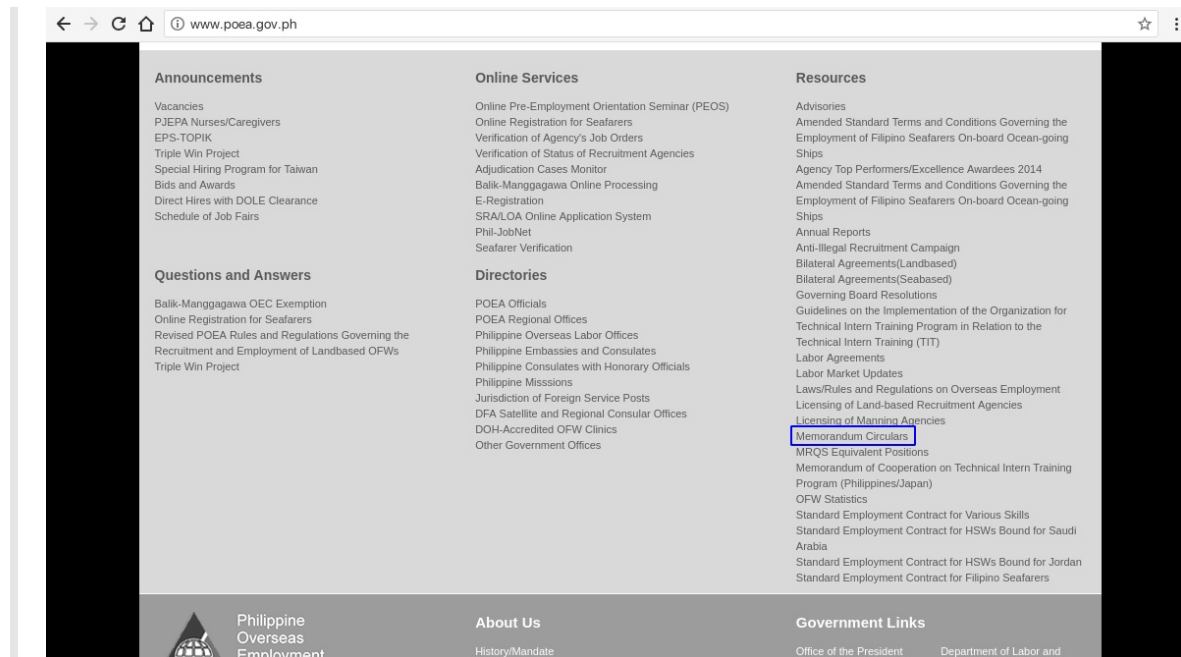
- **Section IV**

Details that Direct-Hires must undergo a *Pre-Employment Medical Examination* (PEME).

Finding this document

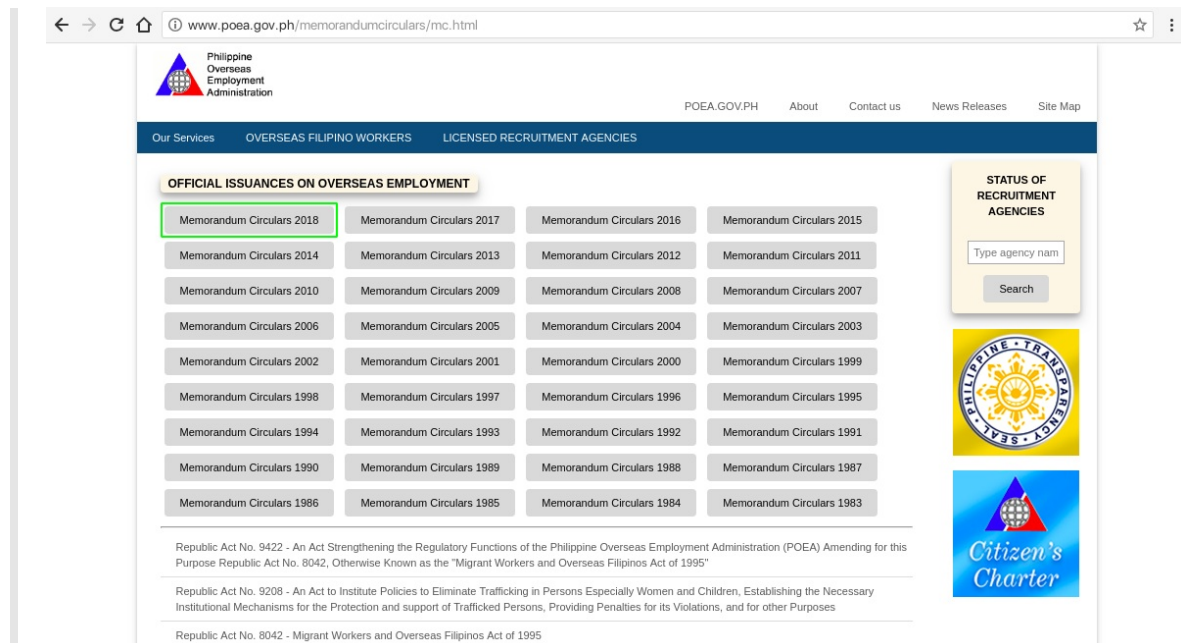
1. [POEA website](#) (start here)

There is a list of resources at the bottom of the page. Look for the link to *Memorandum Circulars*.



1. [Memorandum Circulars page](#)

This page lists the "Official Issuances on Overseas Employment." It has a link to the *Memorandum Circulars of 2018*.



1. [Memorandum Circulars of 2018 page](#)

This page has a link to *Circular No. 08: Implementing guidelines on the Registration of Direct-Hire OFWs*. As of May 2018, this is the latest circular issued by the POEA.

The screenshot shows the official website of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA). The browser address bar displays 'www.poea.gov.ph/memorandumcirculars/2018/mc2018.html'. The website header includes the POEA logo and navigation links: 'Our Services', 'OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS', and 'LICENSED RECRUITMENT AGENCIES'. A secondary navigation bar contains links to 'POEA.GOV.PH', 'About', 'Contact us', 'News Releases', and 'Site Map'. The main content area is titled 'Memorandum Circulars - 2018' and features a table with the following entries:

No.	Subject
1	Suspension of Issuance of OEC for Newly Hired Workers Bound for Kuwait
2	Approval of Job Fair Authority (JFA) and its Penalty Clause
3	Letter of Authority for Principals of Recruitment Agencies of HSWs
4	Guidelines on the Issuance of Certification for the Implementation of the Japan Technical Intern Training Program
5	Guidelines on the Registration of Direct Individual Employers of HSWs
6	ew Procedure for the Online Registration of Seafarers and Seabased e-Contracts System (LBeCS)
7	New Procedure for the Online Registration of Landbased Workers and Landbased e-Contracts System (LBeCS)
8	Implementing guidelines on the Registration of Direct-Hire OFWs

On the right side of the page, there is a green box for 'STATUS OF RECRUITMENT AGENCIES' with a search input field and a 'Search' button. Below this is the official seal of the POEA, and at the bottom right is the 'Citizen's Charter' logo. The footer of the website includes three categories: 'Announcements', 'Online Services', and 'Featured Pages'.

1. **Memorandum Circular No. 08, Series of 2018, Implementing Guidelines on the Registration of Direct-Hire OFWs**
This document was published on May 9th of 2018.

Revised POEA Rules of 2016

Revised POEA rules and regulations governing the recruitment and employment of land-based overseas Filipino workers of 2016. As of May 2018, this is the latest revision of the Rules and Regulations.

- [Revised POEA Rules And Regulations.pdf](#)

Interesting things to note

- **Section 123** (page 31)
This states that "No employer shall directly hire an overseas worker."
- **Section 124** (page 31)
This lists exemptions for the ban on direct hiring. This is also available on [POEA Memorandum Circular No. 08 of 2018](#). (See [Direct Hire exception notes](#) for notes on this exemption.)
- **Section 135** (page 35)
This lists the "Minimum provisions for employment contracts," which are what you'll need for [POLO Verification](#).

Finding this document

1. [POEA Website](#) (poea.gov.ph)
In the footer, look for `Laws/Rules and Regulations`.
2. [Laws, Rules and Regulations on Overseas Employment](#) page
The `Revised POEA Rules and Regulations` document should be somewhere on top of this list.

Skilled workers requirements list (outdated)

The POEA has an outdated a list of requirements for skilled worker requirements list. **This no longer valid** as of May 27th of 2018. It's still listed as the latest requirements in the website, but a new list of requirements is available from the Direct Hire department of the POEA offices.

PROFESSIONAL AND SKILLED WORKERS	
1. Passport with validity period of not less than six (6) months from intended date of departure;	
2. Valid Work Visa, Entry/Work Permit (whichever is applicable per country). -If visa assurance or guarantee is issued by employer, the same should be noted/acknowledged by the Government or Immigration Office in the jobsite;	
3. Employment Contract:	
a. Original copy of Employment Contract or Offer of Employment;	
b. Provisions should be compliant with Sec. 124.d.2, Rule II, Part III, of the POEA Revised Rules 2016;	
c. Verified by the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) for countries with POLO and authenticated by the Philippine Embassy/Consulate for countries with no POLO.	
4. Valid Medical Certificate from DOH-accredited medical clinic authorized to conduct medical exams for OFWs.	
5. Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) Certificate issued by OWWA;	
6. Additional country-specific requirements:	
a. Canada - Labor Market Opinion (LMO), Labor Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) form and Canadian Letter; Canadian Letter and Employer's Certificate of Registration from ECON (Province of Saskatchewan Executive Council) or Saskatchewan Immigrant	

Screenshot of outdated requirements (May 2018)

Fees

These were the fees listed in this document:

- **USD \$100** (or PHP equivalent) for POEA processing fee
- **USD \$25** (or PHP equivalent) for OWWA membership fee

This is most likely no longer valid, either. The new document doesn't have a list of fees.

Finding this document

The location of this document isn't obvious. Here are directions to find the PDF in the May 2018 version of the POEA website.

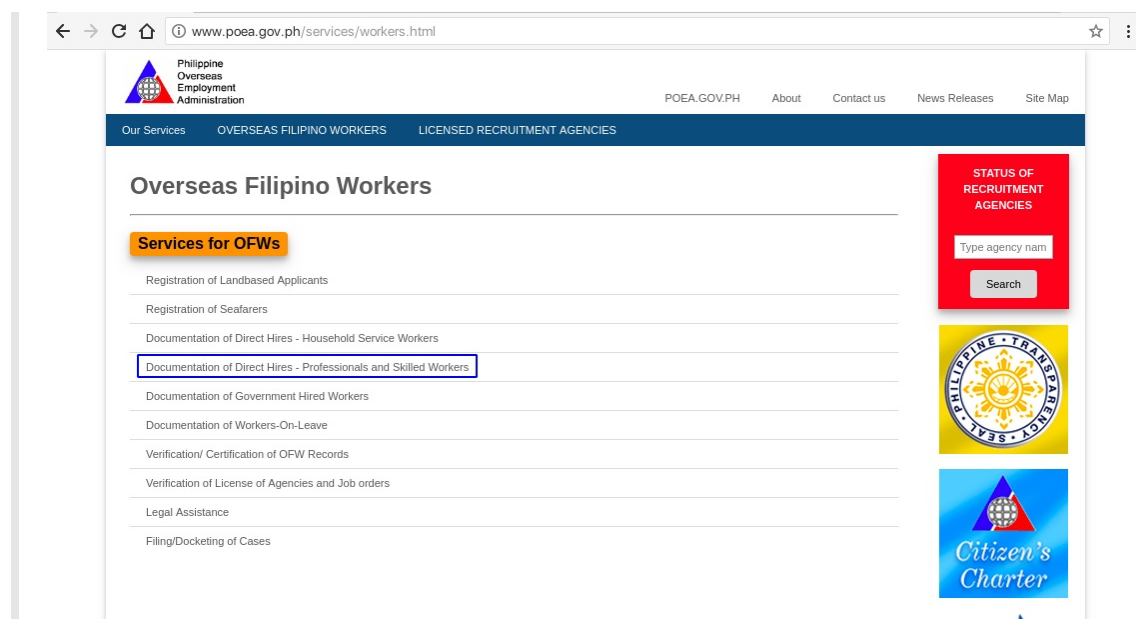
1. Start with the POEA Website

The [POEA Website \(poea.gov.ph\)](http://poea.gov.ph) has a link with information for *Overseas Filipino Workers* in their main navigation.



2. "Overseas Filipino Workers" page

In the [Overseas Filipino Workers](#) page, there's a link to *Documentation of Direct Hires - Professionals and Skilled Workers*. This is the document you're looking for.



3. "Documentation of Direct Hires - Professionals and Skilled Workers" document

This document is named [NH_Professionals.pdf](#).

Effectivity of Memorandum Circular No. 08

As of May 28, 2018, the [Memorandum Circular No. 08, Series of 2018, Implementing Guidelines on the Registration of Direct-Hire OFWs](#) should already be in effect.

ONAR Registry

The memorandum was filed to the Office of the National Administrative Register on the May 10th of 2018. This can be seen in [ONAR Bulletin Nov. 8 No. 19](#), which covers memorandums filed from May 7th to May 11th of 2018.



Issuances Filed with ONAR 07 May to 11 May 2018

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT	5/8/18	18-361	PROC.NO. 482	Declaring Tuesday, 08 May 2018 as a Special (Non-Working) Day in the Municipality of Camiling, Province of Tarlac	5/4/18
OFFICE FOR TRANSPORTATION SECURITY	5/10/18	18-369	MEMO.CIR.NO. 004	Amendments to Air Cargo and Mail Security	5/4/18
OFFICE FOR TRANSPORTATION SECURITY	5/10/18	18-369	MEMO.CIR.NO. 005	Policies and Standards for Security Screening Equipment	5/7/18
PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION	5/10/18	18-373	MEMO.CIR.NO. 08	Implementing Guidelines on the Registration of Direct-Hire Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)	4/26/18
PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION	5/10/18	18-373	ADVISORY NO. 25	Regulations Amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection of Canada	3/7/18
PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY	5/11/18	18-374	MEMO.CIR.NO. 07-2018	Approved Upward Adjustment on the Existing Vessel and Cargo Handling Charges on International Containerized and Non-Containerized Cargoes Handled at South Harbor and MICT	5/4/18

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER

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Diliman, Quezon City
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Effectivity period

The POEA Memorandum Circular No. 08 states that:

This circular shall be effective fifteen (15) days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation and filing with the

This circular shall be effective fifteen (15) days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation and filing with the Office of the National Administrative Register.

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