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Eight steps to hiring a helper

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Reading time: 10 mins

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At a glance

- You've weighed the various pros and cons of hiring a helper and have decided to hire one.
- There are a number of things you have to do before and after she arrives.
- Find out more about these steps to ensure a smooth hiring process and transition.

So, you've decided to hire a migrant domestic worker (MDW). Bringing her into your home will provide much-needed help to your household. Yet, it also means that you will have to take on the responsibilities of an employer. We have put together this 8-step guide, covering everything from the hiring process to welcoming your MDW to your household, to help you.

week must-
dos

Step 5:
Draft the
employment
contract
and sign
the safety
agreement



Step 6:
Manage her
salary the
easier way.

Step 1: Choose between using an employment agency (EA) or hiring directly

Your first decision is how you will hire her. Yes, **licensed EAs can handle much of the administrative work**, like legal requirements, finding potential candidates and vetting their qualifications. However, they also charge for their services, which will add to costs.

Step 7:
Give your
MDW clear
instructions

Before you pick an EA, visit our online **employment agencies directory**. It lists the licensed EAs, along with the names and photographs of registered EA personnel that you may work with. Learn how to verify if they're licensed or registered as it is an offence to engage **unlicensed EAs**. Spend some time on the directory and pay attention to **indicators of performance** like successful retention rate to gauge the reliability of the EAs.

Step 8:
Check in
with her
regularly.

Direct hiring could be more affordable, but it requires more effort on your part such as sourcing for the MDW which may not be ideal if you are pressed for time.

Conclusion




Step 2: Finding the right fit

Once you've decided on the approach, it's time to pick the right helper.

Your MDW must **meet certain requirements**.

Also, think about what you need from her:

- What will she be primarily responsible for? General cleaning? Cooking?
- Do you have young children for her to take care of?
- Do you need someone who has experience in domestic work?
- Does she need the strength to help someone move around?
- Will she need to provide special care for seniors? Consider sending her for **proper training** .

Other considerations could be her cultural fit, religious practices and language abilities.

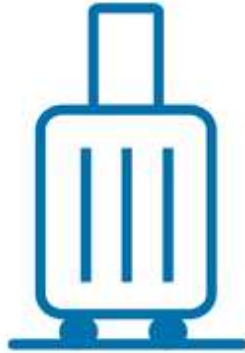
If you want to **check on the employment history** of your prospective MDW, simply log in to **FDW eService** with your Singpass, and prepare her details like FIN, Nationality and more.



Using an EA?

Communicate your preferences clearly to your EA. Don't be afraid to ask questions – your EA **must** provide you with the helper's detailed biodata such as age, name and skills. Check with the EA regarding how they have ensured that the data is accurate when it comes to meeting requirements for age and years of education. You can also ask your EA for the helper's employment history.

After making a shortlist of your preferred helpers, you or your EA can arrange for interviews with them. Speak to the candidates in person if possible - **here are some interview tips**. Otherwise, set up a web or telephone interview. This is a good time to gauge if you and your family are able to communicate with her.



Step 3: Prepare for your MDW's arrival

Before your selected helper arrives, there are a few essential things you need to do.

First-time MDW employers will need to attend the **Employers' Orientation Programme** to learn about your rights and responsibilities before you submit a work permit application.



After that, those who ASPIRE to make it a smooth process can follow these steps:

- Apply for her **work permit**.
- Secure **in-principle approval** to bring her into Singapore.
- Purchase a **security bond** as well as **medical and personal accident insurance** for her. Please note the **insurance enhancements**.
If you're using an EA, get them to explain the coverage of the standard insurance package they offer and the options available for upgrade.
- Implement hassle-free **levy deductions using GIRO**.
- Ready her for working in Singapore by arranging for her **pre-employment medical checkup** and **Settling-In Programme (if she's a first-timer)**.
- Ensure **proper accommodations for her**.

More about the In-Principle Approval (IPA)

As one of the requirements for bringing an MDW into Singapore, it also states information like her salary, number of rest days and name of employer. To make sure your MDW understands the letter, it will be provided in both English and her native language. The **IPA** letter has to be sent to the MDW before she enters Singapore as she would need to show this document to the immigration officer upon arriving in Singapore. You or your EA must ensure that the IPA letter is sent to the MDW before she leaves her home country.

What if I wish to hire a transfer MDW?

In this case, please submit the work permit application together with a written consent from her current employer to transfer her to you as the new employer. When the In-Principle Approval is ready, both you and the current employer will receive it, and it will state the transfer date.

**Step 4: Complete her first-week must-dos**

Assuming your MDW is a first-timer or a returning MDW, here's your list of tasks.

- Send her to the SIP within seven days of arrival. (First-time MDWs only. Your EA can do this for you.)
- Send her to a medical examination within 14 days of her arrival. (Your EA can do this for you.)
- **Apply for issuance of work permit** via **FDW eServices**.
- You may have to **have her photo and fingerprints taken in person at the MOM Services Centre**.
- Upon successful work permit card registration, you'll receive it in five working days.

Did you know...

If you are hiring a transfer MDW, things will be a little simpler. You'll only have to ensure that her current employer has sent her for a medical examination, **apply for issuance of work permit** via **FDW eServices** and wait for the physical work permit card to arrive. Remember not to let her start work until the new work permit has been issued in your name, though.



Step 5: Draft the employment contract and sign the safety agreement

Now, draft an employment contract agreeable to her that includes details of her salary, rest days, and termination clauses. Next, agree with her upon the safety agreement and sign it together.



Step 6: Manage her salary the easier way

Prepare to keep records as you pay your MDW on time and in full, according to the terms of your contract. Never withhold salary or make unauthorised deductions for things like food and medicine. A bank account can help you automate and keep track of payments, and setting up one is easy.

Tip

Applying a bank account to enable ease of salary crediting to your MDW? You can instruct them to help the MDW apply for a bank account when **requesting for Work Permit issuance**. This would save you the hassle of going down to the bank with the MDW should she want to open an account at a later date.



Step 7: Give your MDW clear instructions



Don't assume that your MDW will know how you would like her to perform her duties. Instead, create a schedule for her and demonstrate how you like tasks to be performed, so she knows your expectations.

Speak clearly and slowly when giving instructions as your MDW may not be accustomed to our colloquial language yet. If necessary, use translation tools or learn some basic phrases in her language. You should also encourage your MDW to ask questions and share her thoughts to clear up any doubts.

You may also want to take the time to:

- Set clear house rules, like when she should be back during her rest days or **when is the best time to use her phone**. Encourage her to stay connected with her family to prevent homesickness.
- Discuss dietary requirements and preferences of your family if she cooks for you.
- Highlight any safety and hygiene procedures that you expect.
- Tell her about medication schedules and write down dosages if she's taking care of ill family members.
- Give her a list of numbers to call during emergencies, including those of ambulance services and your family members.



Step 8: Check in with her regularly

Finally, create a supportive environment as you embark on this shared journey. Take the initiative to ask her if everything is well or if she needs to discuss anything.

To ensure her well-being, there will be checks during her employment, such as **post-placement checks by the EA**, MOM **interviews at the Centre for Domestic Employees (CDE) (for first-time MDWs)**, **mandatory 6-monthly medical examinations** and random **house visits**.

Finally, show her your appreciation with a simple “thank you”, which can go a long way.

Conclusion

Hiring an MDW involves many steps, so we hope that this guide has helped you understand the process.

By treating her with respect, providing clear communication, and offering support, you can create a harmonious household environment that benefits everyone, enabling you to fully focus on other aspects of your life.

