



Tips for Employers of Domestic Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Do you employ a domestic worker?

If you employ someone in your household to perform domestic tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, gardening and caring for children, pets and the elderly, this means your home is a workplace.

In Thailand, many domestic workers are migrants, especially from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar.

Domestic workers are at the frontline of protecting you and your family during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some ways you can work with them to ensure that they and your family remain safe and healthy during this difficult time.

What are your obligations to domestic workers you employ?

With COVID-19 spreading across the globe, now is the time to check and make sure domestic workers employed in your household can seek the care they need.



Healthcare and Social Security

There are two options for ensuring domestic workers can access healthcare:

- **Self-enrollment in social security:** domestic workers can enroll themselves under section 40 of the Social Security Act, which covers informal workers.
- **Private insurance:** if for any reason the above protections can't be provided, or are insufficient, there are numerous health insurance options available. Major insurers also provide worker's compensation packages, which can provide coverage for workplace related injury, illness and death. It is recommended that you avoid deducting these costs from the workers' salary. Always check the details of policies to ensure they cover pandemics and diseases.



Leave and Salaries

If workers aren't able to access sufficient leave, they are more likely to come to work sick. It is essential to ensure workers you employ clearly understand that they should stay home if they are unwell, and that their salaries won't be affected.

The following legal requirements apply for the employment of domestic workers in Thailand, regardless of nationality:

- Weekly rest days: at least one day (24 consecutive hours) per week
- Annual leave: at least 13 paid national holidays per year; plus at least 6 days of paid annual leave for workers who have worked 12 consecutive months
- Sick leave: at least 30 days of sick leave paid at their normal wage

More Information regarding COVID-19



Tip

Ensure that domestic workers you employ have an up-to-date visa, stay permit and other identification documents.



Tips to Ensure the Health and Safety of Your Family and of Domestic Workers Employed in Your Household during the COVID-19 Pandemic



Occupational Safety and Health:

- Update the domestic workers on preventative and sanitary measures recommended by WHO and provide them with masks and gloves (which should be changed frequently), soap and clean water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Discuss social distancing methods, for example when going out for groceries.
- If someone in the household is sick, ensure all members of the household including domestic workers are urgently informed and take immediate steps to protect their health and safety.
- Apply quarantine measures equally across the household including for domestic workers.



Social Protection and Medical Insurance

- Migrant domestic workers can receive medical treatment at the hospital or medical center they are registered to, which is normally in proximity to their workplaces or residence.
- Every person who is sick from the COVID-19 virus will receive emergency medical treatment according to the Ministry of Public Health Announcement dated 3 March 2020.



Care Responsibilities

- COVID-19 is a particular risk for people with underlying health issues, or who live or care for people in risk categories including older people. If it's possible, have a conversation with your domestic worker about who they live with to protect both their family and yours from any risk.



Safety during Home-Based Quarantine

- Take steps to ensure the availability of adequate water, nutrition, and living standards for live-in and live-out workers.



Returning to Countries of Origin

- Migrant workers should have their passport and other identity documents in their possession at all times.
- Discuss risks of exposure to COVID-19 during travel, and ways to avoid crowds.
- Provide alcohol-based sanitizer and, if required, masks.
- Discuss safer routes home based on reliable information, for example airlines, bus companies, embassies and government sources.
- Discuss requirements for mandatory quarantine in their home countries.
- If flying, prioritise direct flights to avoid disruptions during transit. Consider providing financial support for safer travel options.



Communicating with Home

- Remember that migrant workers are concerned for their family too. Do not confiscate or restrict access to mobile phones.
- Ensure access to phones, WiFi and/or call credit.



Share Information and Combat Rumours

- Share verified information or work together to find out if the information is reliable.
- Reliable sources include Ministry of Public Health, Department of Employment, and foreign embassies.



Commuting to and from Work

- If they do not live in your home, discuss their route to and from work. Discuss whether they feel safe and whether their transport is crowded.
- Consider covering the cost of a taxi or a less crowded mode of transport.
- If you consider their work non-essential, or if their commute is disrupted by road blocks or Government restrictions, make sure their salary payments are up-to-date and discuss options for paid leave.
- Alternatively, explore possibilities of living-in, as commutes on public transportation might expose the domestic workers to higher risks, noting that migrant domestic workers have the right to choose their own accommodation.



Check in Regularly

- Check in regularly with your domestic worker. Many affected countries are reporting increased incidence of domestic violence.
- If you, your domestic worker or anyone you know needs more information, please contact the Ministry of Labour Hotline 1506, press 2 to speak to an operator in Cambodian, Laotian and Myanmar languages.
- For Thai language, you can call the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security Hotline 1300 which operates 24 hours nationwide.