



Fair Employment Foundation
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How can I hire domestic helpers fairly?

Why it Matters

For too long, employment agencies have been making money from doing a bad job. Employers are charged for bad customer service, while agencies secretly charge domestic helpers too. This illegal practice of charging placement fees leaves domestic helpers in debt and fails employers.

When agencies charge domestic helpers, they are incentivised to place those who are willing to pay, rather than those who are right for the job. When a helper is fired or quits, the agency makes more money by charging replacement workers. Meanwhile, the domestic helper gets further into debt as she borrows more money for a new job.

But there is a better way.

When hiring is done fairly, domestic helpers benefit because they start their jobs free from recruitment debt. Employers benefit because the agency is motivated to find a worker who will be a good match for their family. And Hong Kong benefits because a new standard of professionalism is set for all employment agencies.

Fair Employment Agency (FEA) got started in 2014 because we saw a better way of hiring domestic helpers. Through the years we have helped thousands of households hire domestic helpers, without ever charging fees to workers,



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and looking out for everyone's best interest in each hire. Today, we are more motivated than ever.

We offer full placement, direct hire and contract renewal services. [See which of our options is right for you](#) to get started on the hiring process. If you're not sure where to start or have questions, give us a call on 3568 6858 or send us an email.

Three Steps: Ask, Report, Support

Regardless of the employment agency, there are 3 steps that employers can take in order to make sure they are hiring domestic helpers fairly and supporting fair recruitment.

Ask

Agencies operating illegally will take advantage of misinformation, and will oftentimes brush over or avoid giving you details about their fees. Stay informed by asking both the agency and domestic helper what the conditions of the placement were.

- Ask the employment agency for a *detailed* breakdown of costs for yourself and the worker.
- Ask the domestic helper what they actually paid.
- Ask the domestic helper if they have access to their passport or if the agency or a lender is holding it as collateral.

Report



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Legally, an employment agency can only charge a maximum 10% of the helper's first month's salary. If you find out that the agency overcharged your helper, it is important that you as an employer report this together with the domestic helper affected.

- Report overcharging or passport holding to the relevant Consulate and Labour Department through the [Employment Agencies Portal](#). On 10 October 2018, the Hong Kong Labour Department announced that the records of conviction, revocation/refusal of renewal of licence and written warnings of employment agencies will be published at its online [Employment Agencies Portal](#).
- Be aware that your complaint will be heard more strongly than a helper's, who often do not have the same resources to present their case.

Support

Many domestic helpers will need the support and reassurance of their employer to pursue a case against an overcharging agency. They may not know their statutory rights and may be worried about needing to take time off from work to attend their court hearings.

Encourage the domestic helper to pursue a case by letting them know it is within their rights. Let them know their job with you is not at risk if they pursue a case, and try to accommodate time off for them in order to attend court proceedings and legal counsel.



FAIR RESOURCES

Have questions on hiring or managing domestic workers?

We have answers for you!

Go to:

www.fairagency.org/Answers

or download

FAIR Hong Kong App

available in Google Play or App Store.



Hiring



Managing



Parting Ways



READ THIS FIRST



About the FAIR app



Useful Calculators



Search



FAIR HIRING GUIDE

With these 3 steps, you can ensure you are hiring fairly and supporting fair recruitment of domestic workers.

Get involved or learn more at:

www.fairpledge.org

ASK

- Ask the Agency for a detailed breakdown of costs for yourself and the worker.
- Ask the Worker what they actually paid.
- Ask the Worker if they have access to their passport or if the agency/lender is holding it.

REPORT

- Report overcharging or visa holding to the Consulate and Labour Department
- Be aware that your complaint will be heard more strongly than your worker's.

SUPPORT

- Encourage the worker to pursue a case.
- Be flexible to the needs of the worker as they may need time off to attend court proceedings.