

“7 Steps to Employing a Transfer Domestic Helper that Matches Your Needs”

presented by 121 Personnel Services
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Definition: A transfer domestic helper is a helper who is currently working in Singapore and is seeking to work with another employer.

Step #1 - Understanding your needs

- Why do you need a helper? - children, housework, pets, cooking, etc. What is the main reason?
- Understand that there is no perfect helper.
- Different helpers may work out for different employers depending on skills, experience and character.
- Who qualifies to employ a helper?:
 - the employer's and/or spouse's annual income must be \$30,000 and above
 - if the employer is not a Singapore citizen or permanent resident, then she or her spouse must have a valid employment pass.
 - generally, 1 household (i.e., 1 address) is entitled to only 1 helper.

Step #2 - Knowing the pros and cons of having a helper

- Pretty comprehensive information at www.121personnel.com (you can download 2 free ebooks when you sign up for the 121PS Mailing List.)
- Note that your helper is your employee, much like an office worker. The only difference is that she lives and works in your house.
- Be prepared for inconvenience that may happen - you have 1 more person to help you and 1 more person to take care of, when required.
- Cost of employing a helper:
 - Foreign maid levy (paid to the CPF Board) - \$265 per month. (Note: There is also a concessionary levy of \$170 per month. This is only applicable to the locals if they have children below 12, etc.)
 - Monthly salary for an experienced helper - generally \$400 and above per month.
 - Agency fee - one-off expense - generally \$400 and above, depending on the package. (will generally include security deposit of S\$5,000 in banker's/insurance guarantee and personal accident with a minimum coverage of S\$10,000 for the helper. Please check that the agency will do everything for you and that there are no hidden charges.)

Step #3 - “Are you a first-time employer?”

- First-time employer has to attend a compulsory Employer's Orientation Programme.
- Failure to do so will prevent the employer from employing a helper.
- You can do the course online. Follow the instructions at www.121personnel.com/course.htm
- The cost is \$30. Payment can be made by credit card. You may have to wait 1 day for the issuance of the course password to access the course. The course will take 30 minutes to 2 hours depending on the individual.
- There will be a simple multiple choice questions test after the course.

Step #4 - How to find the right helper

- Various sources - check with friends and their helpers; look at the notice boards at the various expat clubs; and check with maid agencies, etc.
- Know the risks:
 - Some expats may “over-sell” their maids just to get them out of their names.
 - Some helpers may “grab” any job so that they can stay in Singapore.
 - Some maid agencies may not have done the proper screening and matching of the helpers for you. Find out how their maids are screened and matched.
- No matter what you do, you must:
 - conduct an interview with the shortlisted candidates

- talk to the previous employer(s) of the helper you are considering to employ
- know why the helper is transferring to another employer. See whether it sounds reasonable or not.
- check the reference letters of the helper.
- consider your gut feel about the helper.
- Depending on various factors, you may be able to find the right helper within a day to a month.

Step #5 - What documents and information are required from you

- If you are a first-time employer, you will need to provide the Orientation Course certificate.
- If you and/or your spouse have never paid income tax in Singapore before, then the respective companies would have to certify the annual income of you and/or your spouse.
- Other documents required:
 - You and your family's passports
 - You and your family's dependant passes
 - The breadwinner's employment pass
- Standard contracts and forms that you are required to fill in and sign:
 - Security bond
 - Insurance coverage for the helper
 - Agency application form
 - Employment contract with the helper
 - Recruitment contract with the maid agency
 - Early/ Late Acceptance letter
 - Other forms and contracts depending on the agency and your circumstances

Step #6 - Application for your helper

- There are 3 ways to do this: do-it-yourself online; fill in a physical form from MOM (visit www.mom.gov.sg for details); or engage the service of a maid agency.
- Complications that may occur:
 - Your helper changes her mind about working for you.
 - Your helper's ex-employer is unwilling to co-operate with you.
 - Your application may be rejected for whatever reason. Or, the MOM may require further information from you.
 - Your appeal against the rejection may be rejected.
 - The MOM computer system is down.
- WPOne application made by a maid agency will generally be approved within 1-3 days. It may be longer if the workload is heavy or there are complications in the case.

Step #7 - Maintaining a good relationship with your helper

- Your helper is just human as you are. She has her up's and down's, emotions, and character.
- Be forgiving and patient towards her. She has left her country to work in a foreign land so that she can provide better for her family back home.
- Do not treat her like your best friend. Do not treat her like your worst enemy either. Treat her like a fellow human being and a co-worker. But, you must also let her know that you are the boss in a nice way.
- Do not "tempt" her in any way. But, you'll still have to learn to trust her.
- Understand the differences in your culture and hers.
- What should you do if the relationship is not working out?:
 - Have a heart to heart talk with her.
 - Get her friend(s) to talk to her.
 - Get your maid agency to counsel her.
 - Know that it may not always be her fault. It may be your fault, miscommunication or circumstances.

Further Resources for Your Research:

1. The Ministry of Manpower Website:
http://www.mom.gov.sg/publish/momportal/en/communities/work_pass/foreign_domestic_workers.html
2. List of accredited maid agencies: www.case.org.sg/casetrust4.htm (Note that not all agencies have transfer helpers.)
3. Instructions on attending the online course for first-time employers: www.121personnel.com/course.htm (there is a link here which will lead you directly to the online course conducted by the Singapore Polytechnic.)

Disclaimer: The information presented herewith only serves as a short guide. To ensure your specific needs are met and that there are no contraventions of any regulations, please seek the advice of the relevant professional.