

EA Alert Dated: 8 December 2016

EA Alert: Safety of FDWs

This alert is applicable to all employment agencies (EAs) which place Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs), and reminds EAs of your vital role in helping employers to work with their FDW to create a safe working environment in the home.

2 On 3 December 2016, while cleaning the kitchen windows, an FDW had fallen from the unit. She succumbed to her injuries. As intermediaries, EAs play a key role in raising awareness of this issue to you clients. Hence, you are required to emphasise to the employers and FDWs the importance of safety in the household, and the dire consequences should FDWs not heed the safety aspects when performing household chores.

3 EAs need to ensure that the safety agreement between the employer and FDW is explained, agreed, signed and retained by both parties, before the FDW is deployed to the employer's home. This agreement is to ensure that both employers and FDWs are aware of and understand MOM's requirements when cleaning window exterior. This is a requirement under Section 13(A) of the EA Licence Conditions for Comprehensive Licence, and non-compliance carries a fine up to \$5,000 and/or imprisonment up to 6 months.

4 As part of explaining the safety agreement, EAs should remind FDW employers that under the law, they are prohibited from requiring their FDWs to clean the window exterior unless:

- a. The FDW employer, or an adult representative, is physically present to supervise the FDW; and,
- b. Window grilles have been installed and are locked at all times during the cleaning process.

The rules apply to all homes, except for windows that are at the ground level or along common corridors. Stern enforcement action will be taken against employers who fail to adhere to the safety agreement.

5 At the Settling-In Programme (SIP), FDWs are given an advisory and checklist on their performance at SIP to be handed over to their employers. EAs should go through the documents with the employer during deployment and take the opportunity to advise employers to take note of areas where their FDW might require closer supervision. They should also remind employers of their responsibility in ensuring that their FDWs work in a safe manner and take all necessary steps to eliminate the risks involved in all household chores.

6 Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

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