



SPOTLIGHT

WEEKLY REST DAY

for foreign domestic workers

“ We encourage you to openly discuss this new requirement with your FDW and work together to arrive at a mutually agreeable arrangement. ”

All Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) who have their Work Permits issued or renewed on or after 1 January 2013 will be entitled to a weekly rest day.

To give employers and FDWs greater flexibility, employers may compensate their FDWs if there is mutual written agreement between both parties for the FDWs to work on their rest days. The compensation should be at least one day's salary or a replacement rest day within the same month. We also recognise that employers will need time to adjust to the new regulation. Therefore, the new requirement will not apply to existing FDWs until they renew their permits on or after 1 January 2013.

A rest day provides your FDW with an emotional and mental break from work and helps improve her productivity at work. Rest days also improve your FDW's well-being, which has a direct impact on the quality of care your FDW can provide to your loved ones.

We encourage you to discuss this new requirement with your FDW. As you consider the needs of your household, do also take into account your FDW's needs and preferences so that the rest arrangements work well for both you and your family. Your support and understanding will go a long way to help foster a harmonious and productive working relationship between you and your FDW.

FDW Weekly Rest Day

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS



You Have A Question Read the Guide.

“Oh dear! How am I going to manage if my helper goes on her rest day? Can I vary the rest day arrangements? What if my helper doesn't want a rest day? What can she do on her rest day?”

MOM understands that the weekly rest day is a new requirement and some employers may have questions on how they could implement it. MOM has produced a special guidebook, *FDW Weekly Rest Day: A Guide for Employers*, to address some common questions and operational matters which employers may encounter.

The Guide is enclosed with this newsletter in the accompanying employer kit. It is also available on MOM's website at www.mom.gov.sg in Mandarin, Malay and Tamil. We encourage you to read it and keep it for future reference.



Reaping Rest Day's Rewards

Mdm Doris Gee Soi Heng and her FDW, Maritess, have enjoyed an 11-year working relationship. They share their experiences and views on rest days.

Has Maritess always had a rest day?

She always had a regular rest day since she started working with me. She uses the rest day to attend to personal matters like visiting the embassy or sending money to her family.

Starting January 2013, weekly rest days will become mandatory for FDWs with new or renewed Work Permits, with the option for compensation in-lieu. Can you share your thoughts on this?

I am fine with regular rest days for FDWs, but my main concern is the FDWs' finances because they usually need to send money back to their families.

Why do you think it's important for FDWs to have regular rest days?

They're also people like us. On rest days,

they can run errands, as well as enjoy some personal time and take a much-needed break. They need to relax and de-stress as well.

Do you have any concerns when your FDW goes on her rest day?

I've come to trust Maritess. She won't mix around with the wrong crowd and that makes me feel comfortable. I'm also familiar with the friends she goes out with.

How do you ensure that she doesn't get into trouble during her rest day?

When she comes home, she always tells me about her day. We communicate with each

other, so there are no fears or concerns about Maritess taking her rest days.

Since your FDW has regular rest days, do you find that this helps her in doing her job well? What are some of the observations you'd like to share?

She always does a good job. I believe it depends on the individual. She knows what she has to do and she knows her limits. We have a very good relationship.



MARITESS SHARES WHAT SHE DOES ON HER REST DAYS.

"First of all, I go to church and then I send money to my family. I then meet up with my friends and we have lunch. We also go to interesting places like Marina Bay Sands to enjoy the view and take pictures."

DOES THIS APPLY TO



Unsure of whether you're required to give your Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) a weekly rest day?

Here are some scenarios:

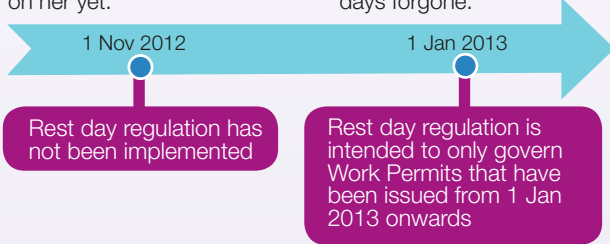
Mrs Tan



Renewed her FDW's Work Permit on 1 Nov 2012, and is renewing again on 1 Nov 2014.

Mrs Tan can renew her FDW's Work Permit and choose to give any number of rest days per month. The regulation has no impact on her yet.

Upon renewal of the FDW's Work Permit, Mrs Tan will need to provide her FDW a weekly rest day or compensation in-lieu of rest days forgone.



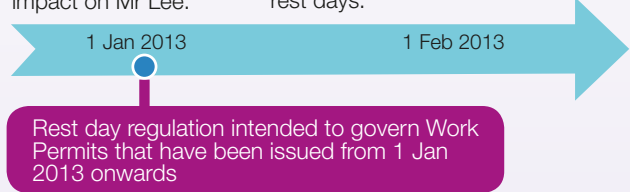
Mr Lee



Hired an FDW on 1 Feb 2011 whose Work Permit is due for renewal on 1 Feb 2013. His current employment contract with this FDW, which was signed on 1 Feb 2011, only provides for one rest day a month and has no expiry date.

The regulation would have no practical impact on Mr Lee.

He should sign a new employment contract to reflect his rest day agreement with his FDW. If not, the law will require that he gives his FDW weekly rest days.

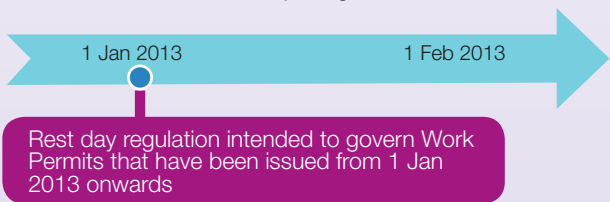


Mrs Pillay



Does not have an FDW today, but hires one on 1 Feb 2013.

When Mrs Pillay hires a FDW, she will need to provide the new FDW a weekly rest day or compensation in-lieu of rest days forgone.



MUST REST DAYS BE ON SUNDAYS?

Your FDW's rest day need not fall on a Sunday. You and your FDW can mutually agree which day of the week the rest day should fall on. To avoid disputes, you and your FDW could have this agreement in writing.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3 REST	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 REST	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 REST	21
22	23	24	25 REST	26	27	28
29	30	31				



All FDWs who have their Work Permits issued from 1 January 2013, following a new or renewal application will be entitled to a weekly rest day with the option for compensation in lieu.



Learning On *Her Rest Days*

Employers' concerns over their FDWs' soon-to-be mandatory rest days are understandable. After all, most of you have your FDWs' interests at heart and want to see them make the most of their rest days and save sufficient money. What better way for FDWs to enrich themselves than through helpful and informative courses? By working together with your FDW to choose a suitable course, you'll be assured that her time is spent fruitfully, as she gains new skills that will be beneficial to her development. These courses will not only benefit your FDW, but also your family!

The Foreign Domestic Workers' Association for Skills Training (FAST) is one of the many organisations in Singapore offering myriad programmes for your FDW to improve her skills. Some of the courses covered by FAST include caregiving for infants, cooking & baking, English language, computer skills and even foot reflexology. Your FDW will be issued a Certificate of Attendance once she has completed her course.

More information on courses for FDWs, including those from other training providers, can be found in the accompanying guidebook, *FDW Weekly Rest Day: A Guide for Employers*.

“ I always encourage my FDW to go for classes that will help improve her skills and allow her to learn new ones as well.”

– Mdm Doris Gee Soi Heng



LIST OF COURSE PROVIDERS

- **Fast - Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Skills Training**
<http://www.fast.org.sg>
- **Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (ACMI) Courses: Caregiving, computer skills, hairdressing**
<http://www.acmi.org.sg/node/14>
- **Aidha - the world's micro-business school Courses: Caregiving, computer skills, hairdressing**
<http://www.aidha.org/singapore-campus/our-curriculum/overview/>
- **Mujahidah Learning Centre Courses: Sewing, cooking, baking, computer skills, religious**
<http://mujahidah.mujahidinmosque.sg>
- **Filipino Overseas Workers (FOWs) @ Bayanihan Courses: Nursing aid, computer skills**
Visit Bayanihan Center at 43 Pasir Panjang Road or call 64722954 (Sunday only)
- **Sekolah Indonesia Courses: English, Computer skills, Sewing, Hair-dressing, Secondary, High School and Open University courses, set and recognised by the Indonesian National Exam Council**
Email marymarkasan@yahoo.com or drop in at 20A Siglap Road