

EA Alert Dated: 5 May 2015

EA Alert: Minimum Entry Age Requirement for FDWs (EALC 7)

This advisory is applicable to employment agencies (EAs) which seek to place foreign domestic workers (FDWs) into employment.

Dear Key Appointment Holder and EA Personnel,

As your EA places FDWs, we wish to remind you about your EA's responsibility to ensure that FDWs whom you bring into Singapore must be at least 23 years old. This is the prevailing minimum age requirement and was set by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) in 2005.

2 As part of your EA's responsibility to ensure that the foreigners brought into Singapore for work meet all the prevailing entry requirements imposed by MOM, you need to verify the actual age of the FDW you place before submitting their work pass applications. Please note that it is insufficient to rely solely on the information from the FDW's passport or her physical appearance. You should carry out due diligence checks. These include:

- a) Examining the FDW's original official documents e.g. passport, educational certificate.
- b) Conducting your own screenings to examine if her physical appearance, mannerisms, speech reflect the age she declares herself to be.
- c) Conduct a basic interview to gather information on the FDW's family history, including the age of the parents and siblings, her education history and work experience, to ascertain if her declared age is consistent with the information gathered from the interview

3 EAs are to ensure that there is proper documentation for the above checks, and keep such records so that it is readily made available in the event that they are requested by MOM for verification.

4 If you suspect that a particular FDW is underaged, you should not deploy the worker to an employer without first verifying her actual age. You should also inform the agencies in the home country to exercise greater care in ensuring that the FDWs are not underaged before submitting the relevant bio-data to you.

5 In some of the investigations conducted by MOM, EAs were found to have placed out FDWs who did not meet the prevailing entry requirement. This is an offence under the EA licence condition 7 and those found culpable may be fined up to \$5,000 or jailed up to 6 months. The Commissioner for Employment Agencies may also impose demerit points and take other administrative measures. In addition, if we discover that your EA acted in a manner that is detrimental to the interest of your clients (ie the FDWs and/or the employers), further actions may be taken.

6 We urge EAs to immediately step up your efforts to review your current recruitment processes, including the overseas agents that you work with, and to take any necessary corrective measures.

7 MOM will continue to share important EA-related information with all EAs through this channel. Please keep your EA email address updated. For further clarification, you may call 6438 5122 or email MOM_FMMD@mom.gov.sg.

Yours Sincerely

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