



THE DOMESTIC HELPER

A Practical Guide For You And Your Home Help

JUDY JOHNSON

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By

Judy Johnson

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I dedicate this book to Paul and Oliver

You have both been my rock and inspiration.

With love

xxx

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Foreword

For many women in many countries, domestic work is one of the oldest and most important occupations, and without it the economy outside the household would cease to function effectively. Like any other profession, domestic work is skilled employment. Domestic workers care for the lives of children, the elderly and the infirm. They tend to the safety and cleanliness of the home, cook and take care of an employer's most prized possessions and beloved family. As such, domestic work involves skills from child psychology, to first aid and knowledge of how to care for a household, but unfortunately many workers do not receive effective training and are often left to flounder. Ms Johnson should be congratulated for producing an informative handbook that will be of enormous value to employers and domestic employees alike.

Janna Gray

Author

Dubai, June 2013

Introduction

Do any of these describe your household situation?

- You want to hire someone to help you with everyday chores but you're not sure how you will cope with a stranger living with you.
- You feel like your domestic helper does not understand your requirements.
- This is your helper's first domestic employment or your first time employing a helper and you don't know how to begin training her.
- Your helper is more like a friend than an employee, so you feel awkward when you ask her to do certain chores.
- Your helper doesn't understand health and safety procedures in the home.
- You don't know how to approach your helper about personal hygiene.
- You need guidance on how to train your helper about nutrition.
- You feel if you comment on any shortcomings that your helper may have, she might respond negatively.

If you have answered yes to one or more of these questions, then this book is for you. This book will provide you and your helper with tips on how to manage your home efficiently, how to keep your helper and your family safe, and advice on working and living together.

This book is arranged to cover three types of domestic helpers: the house keeper, the nanny and the cook. In some instances, the roles and responsibilities of each helper may overlap. One domestic helper is unable to take all three roles and would require assistance to ensure all duties are managed properly.

As part of my research, I conducted a survey, which received a wide range of responses from people with domestic helpers in the Far East and GCC region. One of the common problems faced by employers and their helpers was the lack of communication between the two parties.

Please note that this book uses the feminine form when referring to the domestic helper. This does not, however, restrict the duties of the domestic helper to only the female gender.

The templates in this book are designed to open up lines of communication by providing feedback and setting guidelines for you and your helper to work within. To download free

printable PDF copies of any templates in this book, go to
www.thedomestichelper.com/download/

Chapter 1 – Hiring

I am convinced that nothing we do is more important than hiring and developing people. At the end of the day you bet on people, not on strategies.

~ Larry Bossidy

This chapter offers domestic worker employers, especially first time recruiters, procedures and guidance for hiring staff in the Middle East & Asia. The information contained in this section is subject to change in each of the country's legal system.

The Interview

The hiring process for any job can be frustrating and time consuming. It is therefore, essential that you are well prepared and have the relevant questions on hand. The information below details points to consider when interviewing potential candidates.

- 1) List the qualities you think are important in a housekeeper, nanny or cook e.g., common language, honesty, trustworthiness, energy, flexibility, ability to follow a recipe or ability to care for children.
- 2) Use open ended questions. If you say "Do you like children?" The candidate will likely say "yes". Instead, ask why she likes working with children.
- 3) Query her previous employment such as job duties, the type of family she has worked for, her child care experience and responsibilities, her typical work day, why did she leave, what she enjoyed doing the most, and what she disliked about the job.
- 4) Obtain references from her previous employer(s).
- 5) Enquire on her personal life such as her marital status, children, what she does she like to do in her spare time, does she know many people in this country, does she have a boyfriend, where are her family members, is she religious, does she smoke/drink, does she have any health problems, or does she have any outstanding debts.
- 6) What sort of formal training has the candidate had such as child care, first aid or cooking?
- 7) If you are hiring a housekeeper, bring a couple items of clothing to the interview and ask the helper how she would clean and iron them.
- 8) If you are hiring a nanny, ask the candidate what activities she would do with your children. Does she have experience with looking after babies/children? Let your children meet the helper and see how she interacts with them.
- 9) If you're hiring a cook, ask her what sort of food she can cook and how she would go about it. Can she follow a recipe?
- 10) Appreciate that a helper who has never worked as a domestic helper before will not know how to answer some of these questions and would require training. So be clear on what duties and responsibilities you expect from your helper.

Hiring in the UAE



Requirements

Anyone hiring a domestic worker in the UAE must have a minimum monthly salary of AED 6,000 or AED 5,000 if accommodation is provided by the employer's company.

If employers are caught hiring an unsponsored domestic helper, they may be subject to a fine of up to AED 70,000 plus one month's custodial sentence, and in some instances, followed by deportation. The domestic helper may also receive a custodial sentence and be deported for a year. Domestic helpers who reoffend will be banned from the country permanently.

Bachelors are not permitted to sponsor a helper.

The head of the family, usually the male, is the helper's sponsor. Although, not usually the standard, females are allowed to sponsor a domestic helper.

Cost

The cost of hiring a helper can reach up to AED 8,000. This would include AED 110 employment entry visa (AED 500 if the helper is already in the country) and approximately AED 50 typing fee; AED 2,000 refundable deposit and AED 50 typing fee; AED 325 medical; AED 140 Resident ID application and AED 5,200 resident visa.

The above cost is an indication of the fees in Dubai and may change. Expect to pay more in other Emirates, particularly Sharjah, where the resident's visa can cost as much as the helper's annual salary.

Nationality/Age

Domestic workers from Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines are permitted to work in the UAE. At the time of writing, there is a temporary ban on hiring domestic helpers from Ethiopia.

The minimum age of domestic helpers in the UAE is 18. However, some governments impose age restrictions, particularly domestic helpers from the Philippines where the minimum age is 23 and 30 for Nepalese and Indian domestic staff. The maximum age is 60.