

Live-in Domestic Workers

This model contract was developed through analysis of domestic laws and international labour standards. It serves as an advocacy tool and a basis for discussion. For use as a contract between employers and workers, it may be adapted but the ILO recommends maintaining close alignment with the original. Though Sri Lankan labour laws lack specific provisions for domestic workers, existing laws, the Constitution, and ratified international standards—based on equality and human rights—can be interpreted to ensure their protection.

Key steps for employers:

- Ensure compliance with national laws, regulations, and collective agreements.
- Discuss contract terms verbally with the worker.
- Use Sinhala or Tamil, ensuring both parties understand the language.
- Provide a clear, written contract outlining employment terms.
- Encourage workers with literacy challenges to seek help from a trusted third party.

Please refer to Annexes 4 and 5 for the full titles of the Sri Lankan laws and international labour standards cited in the reference boxes on the right-hand side.



1. Parties to the contract

This employment contract is executed and entered by and between

1.1 The employer

Full name :

NIC/passport number :

Address :

Telephone number : Residence : Mobile :
and

1.2 The worker

Full name :

NIC/passport number :

Address :

Telephone number : Residence : Mobile :

☐ The worker certifies that she/he is 18 years or over 18 years old on the date of entering into contract.

(Please tick the box)

The employer should give the employee a clear, comprehensible contract stating employment terms and the employer's name and address.

S&OE Act Sec 15 (1), 15 (2); C.189 Art 7(c)

Persons under 18 should not be employed as domestic workers.

EWY&C Act (HOR) Part 1 Reg2(i)

Children should be protected from harmful and worst forms of labour.

CRC Sect 32; C.182 & C.138



2. Emergency contact person

2.1 Name:

2.2 Relationship to the worker:

2.3 Mobile number:

Specifying an emergency contact is best practice.



3. Period of employment

3.1 This employment will begin on and will end on

3.2 Duration of this employment contract: months/ years

The employment period and duration should be specified.

S&OE Act (RER) Sec 15 (1), 15 (2) & 17; C.189 Art7(c)



4. The place of employment

4.1 Address:

(This should be the same as the employers' address mentioned above)

The workplace address should be specified.
S&OE Act Part 1 (RER) Sec 17; C.189 Art 7(b)



5. Job title and job description

5.1 Job title:

(Please refer to the Annex 1 - Job titles)

5.2 Job description

(Please complete and attach the Annex 2 - List of duties)

5.3 The employer shall obtain an agreement from the worker before assigning changes to the tasks agreed as per Annex 2.

All amendments to the tasks and any additional tasks shall be recorded in Annex 2.

The job title and duties should be specified.
S&OE Act (RER) Sec 17; C.189 Art 7 (d), Article 1 (a) & (b); R.201 Para 6 (2) a



6. Wages and benefits

6.1 The worker will be paid at the following rate: LKR per day/week/month (please circle).

6.2 The employer agrees to pay the wages on the following basis.
(Please tick the relevant option)

- ☐ Weekly on the (specify the day) of each week
- ☐ Fortnightly (specify the day) of each fortnight
- ☐ Monthly (specify the day) of each month

6.3 Method of payment: (Please tick the applicable box).

- ☐ Paid in cash
- ☐ Deposited in the worker's bank account

6.4 The worker will be entitled to the following benefits as mutually agreed:

- a) Food or food allowance of LKR
- b) Accommodation

6.5 The employer shall review and increase the worker's wage annually.

6.6 Any of the deductions from worker's wage should be agreed by the worker.

6.7 The employer and worker should maintain a document showing the signatures of both parties on the payment of the agreed wage.
(Please complete Annex 3 - Record of wage payments)

Domestic workers should be paid in cash, like others, at or above the minimum wage.

- C.189 Art 7(e) & (h), Art 11(c); C.100 & C.111
- National minimum monthly wage - LKR 17,500
 - National minimum daily wage - LKR 700
- NMWW Act Sec3(1)

Specify the payment schedule and method. C.189 Art 7(e) & 12(1)

In-kind payments (e.g., food or housing) should benefit the worker and be mutually agreed upon.
C.189 Art 7 (h) & 12(2)

Employees in Sri Lanka typically receive annual wage increases to reflect the cost of living and/or performance.

Authorized deductions (e.g., loans, advances) must not exceed 60% of the wage. S&OE Act Part 11 Sec 18 (1), 19 1 (a) & (c)

Signed pay slips should be kept by both parties to help resolve disputes.
S&OE Act (RER) Part II Sec 17 & 18; R.201, para 8(1) & 15(1); C.189, Art 12(2)



7. Hours of work

- 7.1 The number of working hours agreed mutually shall not exceed 8 hours a day and overtime to be compensated as per mutual agreement.
- 7.2 The worker shall be entitled to overtime payments, excess of the number of hours agreed in a working day.
- 7.3 The worker is entitled to twice the normal hourly rate if the worker is required to work on previously agreed weekly rest days.
- 7.4 The worker is entitled to a paid break of thirty minutes for every four consecutive hours of work in a day.
- 7.5 The worker is entitled to not less than one (1) rest day (continuous 24 hours) on as mutually agreed in every period of seven (7) days.
(Please insert the day agreed by both parties)
- 7.6 The worker is free to leave the house and dispose of their free time as they choose during periods of daily and weekly rest, public holidays and annual leave.

Work should not exceed 8 hours per day or 45 hours per week, with overtime limited to 12 hours weekly.

S&OE Act (RHE) Part I Sec 3(1), (RER) Part I, Sec 3

Women employees should not be forced to work at night.

EWY&C Act Part 1 (Night Work) Sec 2 a(2)

Each hour of overtime should be paid at no less than 1.5 times the regular hourly wage. S&OE Act (RER) Part I, Sec 7

Workers should be paid overtime at a higher rate.

C.189 Art 10(1); R.201 Paras 6(2)(c) & 8(1)

Contracts must clearly state daily rest and working hours.

C.189 Art 7(f), 7(g) & 10(1)

Employees should get a 30-minute break after every 4 hours of work.

S&OE Act (RHE) Sec 9(2)

Employees should be entitled to 24 consecutive hours of weekly rest.

C.189 Art 10(2)

Live-in workers are not required to stay with the family during rest breaks or leave. C.189 Art 9 (b)



8. Holidays and leave

- 8.1 The worker will be entitled to 14 days of paid leave (including casual and sick leave) in a calendar year.
- 8.2 The worker should be able to accumulate annual leave and sick leave at the rate of days per month.
- 8.3 All other leave including public holidays, will be determined on mutual agreement between both parties.

Domestic workers should receive equal treatment in hours, overtime, rest, and leave, with consideration for the unique nature of their work. C.189 Art 10(1)

Employees are entitled to 14 days of paid annual leave. S&OE Act (RER), Sec 6(1)(b)

Domestic workers can accumulate leave, like workers. S&OE Act Part I Sec 6 (3); C.189 Art 7(g), R.201 6(2) b & 11 (3)

Employees are entitled to paid leave on all public holidays. S&OE Act Sec 7



9. Social protection

- 9.1 If the worker is injured or becomes ill during work or work-related travel, the employer should provide immediate medical care, pay for necessary medical expenses, and provide due compensation.
- 9.2 Maternity leave: If the worker becomes pregnant, the parties agree that the worker will be entitled to days of paid maternity leave.

Domestic workers should have equal social security, including maternity benefits. C.189 Art 14

If a worker is injured at work, the employer should provide compensation. WCO Part 3

Women workers are entitled to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave.

MB Act Para 140 Sec 3

Women employees can take 70 days of maternity leave from the childbirth.

SO&E Act Part 1A - Maternity Benefits, Sec 18B(1) & (2)



10. Living and working environment

- 10.1 The worker will be provided with accommodation for the duration of their service, consisting of a separate, private room that is adequately furnished, well-ventilated, and lockable.
- 10.2 The employer shall provide the worker, free of charge, with proper sanitation facilities, such as clean drinking water and washrooms, for the duration of their employment.
- 10.3 The employer shall provide and maintain suitable and adequate safety and health measures to protect domestic workers by eliminating workplace hazards and minimizing risks.
- 10.4 The employer shall ensure an enabling work environment, free from all forms of violence, and should not subject the worker to physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
- 10.5 The worker has the right to keep their travel and identity documents, along with other personal belongings.

Domestic workers have the right to privacy-respecting, decent and safe living/working conditions. C.189, Art 6 & 13

The worker should have a private, lockable, furnished room with good airflow and their own key. R.201 Art 17 (a)

Employers should provide clean water and washrooms. FO (Amendment) 12/1976 Sec 15(1), 31(1), 49; S&OE Act Sec 12; OSH&WR Reg 6

Employers should ensure safety by removing hazards, reducing risks, and providing safe equipment, ventilation, fire protection and first aid. FO Sec 24 & 25; OSH&WR Reg 3; HOR Sec 3; C.189 Art 13

Sexual harassment, in any setting, is a criminal offence. Penal Code of Sri Lanka (Sec 345)

All workers have the right to a work environment free from any violence and harassment. C.189 Art 5; C.190 Art 4, 6 & 7

Employers should let workers keep their belongings and identity documents. C.189 Art 9 (c)



11. Dispute resolution

- 11.1 Any disputes arising from this employment contract shall first be addressed through amicable negotiations.
- 11.2 Domestic workers have the right to seek assistance from domestic workers' unions in the event of a dispute.
- 11.3 If these attempts fail, either party may file a complaint with the Commissioner General of Labour or their representative in the relevant area.

Any worker has the right to take employment disputes to the Labour Tribunal or use conciliation. ID Act 31 b (1) & 33 (d); C189 Art 16

Domestic workers may contact the following trade unions for support:

- Protect Union: 070 430 7003/ info@protect.lk
- Centre for Working Women: 071 338 6433/centreforworkingwomen@gmail.com
- Domestic & General Workers Union: 076 058 6807/ dgwu.gs.office@gmail.com



12. Termination of employment contract

- 12.1 Both the employer and worker have the right to terminate the contract by giving one month's advance notice in writing to the other party.
- 12.2 In case of breach of contract, both parties have the right to terminate the contract and claim compensation arising from the breach.
- 12.3 At the end of the employment relationship, the employer shall provide the worker with a certificate stating the period and nature of the services, regardless of the conditions under which the contract was terminated.
- 12.4 The reason for termination of the employment contract should be notified to the worker in writing. In the case where the domestic worker is illiterate, notice should be explained orally by the employer in the presence of a witness.
- 12.5 If the worker is dismissed without fault, the employer agrees to provide the worker with a payment for the period/months of work completed and any outstanding payments should be made promptly.

Contracts should include terms for ending employment, including notice. C189 Art 7(k)

Employers must get the Labour Commissioner's approval and worker consent before termination. TEWA, Sec 2 (1) (a) & (b)

Workers and employers can terminate breached contracts and seek legal remedies. C.189 Art 16; ID Act, Sec 31B (1), 31C (1) & 33

Employers should provide a service certificate stating the duration and type of work at the end of employment. S&OE Act, Sec 18; C.189 Art 7(j)

Employees have the right to be informed in writing of termination; if illiterate, it should be explained orally with a witness. C.189 Art 9

Employees dismissed without cause should receive all due payments promptly. ID Act Sec 33; C.189 Art 11; R.201 Para 15(2)
When an employee resigns, the employer should pay all due wages within two working days. S&OE Act (RER) Part II, Sec 19(1)(c)



13. Right to organize

13.1 The employer recognizes the domestic worker's right to join a trade union, support trade union activities and participate in union activities.

All workers have the right to join and participate in trade unions without retaliation.
TUO Sec 2; ID A(Amendment) 56/199, Part V-A, Sec 32A; Constitution of SL, Art 14(1) (C) and (d); C.189 Art 3; C.87



14. Other conditions

14.1 Any changes to this agreement shall be valid only if made in writing and signed by both the employer and the worker.



15. Signatures of the contracting parties

15.1 Both the employer and worker agree with the terms and conditions set out in this contract.

15.2 The worker confirms that he/she has received a copy of this contract and confirms that the content thereof has been properly explained before signing.

15.3 The worker agrees to accept the job offer made by the employer.

This contract is made in duplicate. The Parties to the contract, having read and understood the entire substance of the contract, hereby sign their names.

Signature of the employer

Date / /

Place

Signature of the worker

Date / /

Place



Annexes

Job titles for domestic workers

List of duties for domestic workers

Record of wage payments

Sri Lankan laws that informed this contract

International labour standards guiding the provisions of the contract

Annex 1: Job titles for domestic workers

(Please tick the appropriate title)

Domestic housekeeper	<input type="radio"/>	Gate keeper/guard	<input type="radio"/>
Caregiver (adult care)	<input type="radio"/>	Cook	<input type="radio"/>
Caregiver (childcare)	<input type="radio"/>	Gardener	<input type="radio"/>
Caregiver (caring for a sick person)	<input type="radio"/>	Launderer	<input type="radio"/>
Caregiver (caring for a person with disability)	<input type="radio"/>	House driver	<input type="radio"/>
Domestic cleaner	<input type="radio"/>	Caretaker	<input type="radio"/>
..... (Mention relevant title here)	<input type="radio"/> (Mention relevant title here)	<input type="radio"/>

Source: Activities of private households- United Nations Statistical Commission 2002, International standard industries classifications of all economic activities

Annex 2: List of duties for domestic workers

(Please tick the relevant duties)

General cleaning of house	<input type="radio"/>	Vacuuming carpets and upholstery	<input type="radio"/>
Cleaning and sanitizing toilets, washbasins, bathtubs, and showers	<input type="radio"/>	Preparation/cooking meals	<input type="radio"/>
Waiter - serving food	<input type="radio"/>	Assisting to prepare meals	<input type="radio"/>
Laundry - machine wash	<input type="radio"/>	Clearing and cleaning up after meals	<input type="radio"/>
Laundry- hand washing	<input type="radio"/>	Removal of refuse/garbage	<input type="radio"/>
Hanging out laundry	<input type="radio"/>	Outdoor cleaning, walls, lights, windows	<input type="radio"/>
Ironing	<input type="radio"/>	Polishing floors and verandas	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining the garden	<input type="radio"/>	Caring for elderly individuals	<input type="radio"/>
Mowing lawns	<input type="radio"/>	Caring for children	<input type="radio"/>
Plant trimming and pruning	<input type="radio"/>	Providing care for a person with a disability	<input type="radio"/>
Providing care for pets	<input type="radio"/>	Providing care for a sick person	<input type="radio"/>
Washing cars	<input type="radio"/>	Caregiver	<input type="radio"/>
General driving duties	<input type="radio"/>	Guarding the house	<input type="radio"/>
Supervising the work of other domestic workers employed in the household	<input type="radio"/> (Other relevant duties)	<input type="radio"/>

I confirm that I understand and agree to the list of duties assigned to me above.

Signature of the employer

Date

Place

Signature of the worker

Date

Place

(The completed and signed list of duties should be attached to the employment contract.)

Annex 3 : Record of wage payments

Acknowledgement receipt

Year

Month Week (If applicable)

Name of worker	Monthly /weekly wage of the worker (in LKR)	Total amount of deductions as mutually agreed including loans/ advances (in LKR)	Total wage paid (in LKR)	Date of payment

I acknowledge that I have received my monthly/weekly wage indicated above for the month/week of in the year

Signature of the worker Date

Signature of the employer Date

Annex 4 : Sri Lankan laws that informed this contract

- Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, No. 47 of 1956 (EWY&C Act) | Hazardous Occupations Regulations No. 01 of 2021 (HOR)
- Factories Ordinance, No. 12 of 1976 as amended (FO)
- Industrial Disputes Act, No. 43 of 1950 as amended (ID Act)
- Occupational Safety, Health, and Welfare Regulations 1984 (OSH&WR)
- Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Act, No. 15 of 2018 as Amended (MB Act)
- National Minimum Wage of Workers (Amendment) Act, No. 48 of 2024 (NMWW Act)
- Shop and Office Employees Act, No. 19 of 1954, as amended (S&OE Act) | Regulation of Employment and Remuneration (RER) | Regulation of Hours of Employment (RHE)
- Termination of Employment of Workmen (Special Provisions) Act No.45 of 1971(TEWA)
- Workmen's Compensation Ordinance No. 15 of 1990 as amended (WCO)
- Trade Unions Ordinance No. 14 of 1935 (TUO)
- Penal Code of Sri Lanka Ordinance No. 2 of 1883 (Penal Code)
- The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (Constitution of SL)

Annex 5 : International labour standards guiding the provisions of the contract

- Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) – C.189
- Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201) - R.201
- Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) – C.190
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 - CRC
- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) – C.87
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) – C.182
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) – C.100
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) – C.111