Working abroad from the Philippines

Your rights under the law of the Philippines, and where to get free help

What the law of the Philippines says

Agency fees — PARTIAL
The law limits fees, or bans them only for some jobs or countries.

Written contract — STRONG
You must get a written contract, checked by the government, before you leave.

Training before you go — STRONG
Training on your rights is required and free.

Insurance or welfare fund — STRONG
A government fund or insurance covers death, injury and the trip home.

Help line — STRONG
There is an official help line, open 24 hours.

A lawyer abroad — STRONG
By law, the government pays for legal help abroad, also in court.

Safe place to stay — STRONG
By law, embassies in the main countries must have a safe place to stay.

Complaint at home — STRONG
A special office at home can order the agency or employer to pay you.

This is what the law says. What happens in practice can be different.

MAIN LAWS

- Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (RA 8042)
- RA 10022 amending RA 8042
- Department of Migrant Workers Act (RA 11641)

Before you go

1. Keep a photo of your passport, visa and contract on your phone. Give copies to your family.
2. Ask for a receipt for every payment to an agency.
3. Save the numbers on this page before you leave.

Free help

Department of Migrant Workers (DMW): 1348 hotline
1348 · +63 2 1348
dmw.gov.ph
24-hour hotline for Filipino workers abroad and their families: repatriation, legal and welfare help.

Justice Without Borders
justicewithoutborders.org
Helps migrant workers bring claims in the country where they worked, even after returning home, with pro bono lawyers.

We list a phone number only when we have checked it.

Court decisions that helped workers

A Filipino seafarer was sent home before his contract ended. The law limited what he could claim to three months' pay. The Supreme Court said this limit treated overseas workers unfairly and struck it down, so he could claim pay for the rest of his contract.

Supreme Court of the Philippines, 2009 · Serrano v. Gallant Maritime Services

Short summaries, not yet checked line by line against the full judgment.

Help in the country where you work
theimr.org/legal-help

More detail and sources
theimr.org/countries-of-origin

New court decisions and laws, once a month, free
theimr.org/updates

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