



REGULATORY FRAMEWORK GOVERNING MIGRANT WORKERS ¹

Updated December 2023

The below table refers to workers in Qatar, not including those who are employed in the Qatar Financial Centre.



International
Labour
Organization

PRIVATE SECTOR WORKERS

(other than domestic workers)

DOMESTIC WORKERS

KEY LEGISLATION	Labour Law No. 14 of 2004; and Entry, Exit and Residence Law No. 21 of 2015.	Law No. 15 of 2017 Concerning Domestic Workers; and the Standard Unified Contract .
RECRUITMENT		
RECRUITMENT FEES	Charging workers recruitment fees or expenses or any other costs is prohibited.	Employers are prohibited from deducting recruitment fees, charges or expenses from workers' pay. ²
PASSPORT CONFISCATION	It is illegal for employers to confiscate passports (penalty of up to 25,000 Qatari riyals (US\$6,865)). ³ Passports can only be kept in an employer's custody with the written consent of the worker. ⁴	
	When employers provide accommodation, it should be equipped with storage facilities where workers can keep their personal belongings and documents, including passports. There must be personal storage for each worker that is lockable and easily accessible. ⁵	
WORKING CONDITIONS		
CONTRACT	Employment contracts must be authenticated by the Ministry of Labour (MOL) through an electronic contract authentication system. The MOL system creates bilingual contracts in Arabic and another language. ⁶ Standardized contracts are produced for domestic workers in accordance with the agreed template (the Standard Unified Contract). A worker (including a domestic worker) may work for another employer in addition to their basic working hours, so long as they obtain the permission of the MOL and provided that both parties to the contract of employment consent. ⁷	
MINIMUM WAGE	The minimum wage for all workers, including domestic workers, is presently set at 1,000 riyals (US\$275) per month. If the employer does not provide suitable accommodation and food for the worker/employee, the minimum housing allowance shall be 500 riyals (US\$137) per month and the minimum subsistence allowance shall be 300 riyals (US\$82) per month. ⁸	

¹ The information in this factsheet is made available for general information purposes only. The information included does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. No obligations or rights can be derived from the information provided. This factsheet was prepared by the ILO FAIRWAY Project, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and is based on publicly available information.

² Law No. 15 of 2017 Concerning Domestic Workers does not explicitly stipulate if recruitment agencies or third parties can charge fees to workers. The revised Standard Unified Contract for domestic workers, however, states: "The recruitment agency or employer shall bear the worker's recruitment fees from [their] home country. It is not allowed to deduct any amount from the worker."

³ Law No. 21 of 2015 Regulating the Entry, Exit, and Residence of Expatriates, article 33.

⁴ Law No. 21 of 2015 Regulating the Entry, Exit, and Residence of Expatriates, article 8.

⁵ Ministerial Order No. 18 of 2014 on Determining the Requirements and Specifications of Adequate Housing for Workers, article 3.

⁶ Labour Law, No. 14 of 2004, article 38; Ministry of Labour, [User's Guide: Digital Authentication Service for Employment Contracts](#).

⁷ Legislative Decree No. 19 of 2020.

⁸ Law No. 17 of 2020 Determining the National Minimum Wage for Workers and Domestic Workers. The minimum wage committee reviews the wages of workers and employees at least once a year, taking into account economic factors, including economic growth, competitiveness, productivity, and the needs of workers, employees and their families.

<p>WORKING HOURS</p>	<p><i>The Rule</i> 8 hours per day, or 48 hours per week.</p> <p><i>Exceptions</i> During the month of Ramadan, the maximum working hours are 36 hours per week or 6 hours per day.</p> <p>Specific categories of workers are excluded from the rule, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • persons in senior management positions;⁹ and • workers who conduct preparatory work, complementary work, security work, cleaning work and fire-fighting work.¹⁰ 	<p>The legislation stipulates that working hours should be no more than 10 hours per day, excluding rest, food and worship breaks.¹¹ However, the standard unified contract clarifies that normal hours of work are 8 hours per day, though a worker may be asked to work an additional two hours per day, taking the maximum daily hours of work to 10 hours.¹²</p>
<p>REST PERIODS</p>	<p>1 day per week.</p>	<p>1 day per week.</p>
<p>OVERTIME</p>	<p><i>The Rule</i> Overtime provisions are at 125 per cent of the wage, noting that the actual working hours per day cannot exceed 10 hours.¹³</p> <p><i>Exceptions</i> Daily working hours can exceed 10 hours in very limited circumstances.¹⁴</p> <p>Workers who work between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. are paid 150 per cent of their basic wage, except for shift workers.</p>	<p>The Standard Unified Contract notes that overtime provisions are at 125 per cent of the wage, and the actual working hours per day cannot exceed 10 hours (2 hours of overtime per day only).</p>
<p>PAYMENT OF WAGES</p>	<p>Employers are required to pay wages electronically in accordance with the Wage Protection System.¹⁵</p>	<p>It is possible for the employer to pay wages through the worker’s bank account, or in cash by virtue of a receipt signed by the worker, which confirms their receipt of the full wage.</p> <p>Employers must pay wages at the end of the month and no later than the third day of the following month.¹⁶</p>
<p>ANNUAL LEAVE</p>	<p>After completing one year of work with the employer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 3 weeks for workers who have worked for less than 5 years; and • At least 4 weeks for those who have worked for five years or more. 	<p>3 weeks per year. A domestic worker shall be entitled, for every two years in service, to a return air ticket to their country of origin or place of residence to go on holiday.¹⁷</p>
<p>OSH AND LABOUR ACCOMMODATION</p>	<p><i>The Rule</i> Workers should not work outside between 10 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. from 1 June to 15 September. Work should stop in a workplace – regardless of the time – when the temperature exceeds 32.1 degrees on the Web Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) index.¹⁸</p>	<p>Not specified by law.</p>

9 Labour Law, No. 14 of 2004, article 76. Persons in senior management include: chairpersons of boards of directors, general directors, and persons holding supervisory positions at work. Persons in senior management positions are excluded from the scope of articles 73–75 of the Labour Law, which cover maximum work hours, overtime and weekly rest.

10 Ministerial Decision No. 11 of 2005 on Categories and Occupations Exempted from the Provisions Limiting Working Hours. According to this exception, regular work hours plus overtime shall not exceed 12 hours per day.

11 Law No. 15 of 2017 Concerning Domestic Workers, article 12. The period of these rest breaks is not specified.

12 Standard Unified Contract for domestic workers, article 4.

13 Labour Law, No. 14 of 2004, article 74.

14 Labour Law, No. 14 of 2004, article 74. The exception provided is for “overtime work [that] is necessary for the prevention of gross loss or dangerous accident or for the repair or alleviation of the consequences of the said loss or accident”.

15 Labour Law, No. 14 of 2004, article 66.

16 Law No. 15 of 2017 Concerning Domestic Workers, article 8.

17 Law No. 15 of 2017 Concerning Domestic Workers, article 14.

18 Decision of the Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs No. 17 of 2021 Specifying Measures to Protect Workers from Heat Stress, articles 2 and 4. In case of noncompliance by the employer, a workplace may be shut down, in whole or in part, by a decision of the Minister.

Workers have the right to stop working and to submit a complaint to the Ministry when they have good reason to believe that heat stress is a threat to their safety or health. Workers shall inform their supervisors to examine their situation. In such cases, workers may not be dismissed, subjected to discrimination or deprived of their rights.¹⁹

The Exception

Workers in oil and gas companies.²⁰

LEGAL ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION²¹

<p>MEDICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE</p>	<p>Mandatory private health insurance, providing coverage for basic healthcare services, is required for all expatriates and visitors.²²</p> <p>Employers need to conduct annual health check-ups of workers engaged in outdoor work to diagnose and manage any chronic disease(s) that may contribute to the risk of heat stress. The cost of the check-ups should be borne by employers.</p>	<p>Employers have to provide appropriate medical care, medicine and medical equipment in case of sickness or injury during the performance of domestic workers' duties, or as a result thereof, without any financial burden being incurred by the domestic worker.²³</p>
<p>SICKNESS LEAVE AND PAY</p>	<p>Up to 2 weeks of fully paid sick leave after 3 months from commencing work; plus 4 weeks of additional sick leave at half pay. Any additional sick leave will be unpaid.²⁴</p> <p>Worker may be terminated at the end of 12 weeks of sick leave if the medical report states that the worker is unable to resume work.²⁵</p>	
<p>UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS</p>	<p>Not specified by law.</p>	
<p>EMPLOYMENT INJURY BENEFITS</p>	<p>A worker who suffers a work injury is to receive appropriate treatment at the expense of their employer. Worker is to receive their full pay during the treatment period or for a period of six months (whichever is shorter). After six months the worker will receive half pay until they recover or are declared as having a total disability. In the event of death or permanent disability (partial or total), the worker (or their heirs) has the right to compensation, as calculated according to Sharia law.²⁶</p>	<p>Employers have to provide appropriate medical care, medicine and medical equipment in case of sickness or injury during the performance of domestic workers' duties, or as a result thereof, without any financial burden being incurred by the domestic worker.²⁷</p>

19 Decision No. 17 of 2021, article 6.

20 Decision No. 17 of 2021, article 8.

21 For further information on migrant workers access to social protection in the Gulf Council Cooperation Countries, please see: ILO (2023). [Review of National Social Protection Legislation and Legal Frameworks for Migrant Workers in the Gulf Countries](#).

22 Law No. 22 of 2021 on Healthcare Services in the State of Qatar, article 10. While this law is technically in force, it is not currently being implemented, with implementation expected to roll out in phases. In the meantime, in practice, employers are not required to provide health insurance for workers. Expatriate residents can, however, access basic public healthcare by purchasing a government healthcare card for a nominal fee.

23 Standard Unified Contract for domestic workers.

24 Labour Law, No. 14/2004, article 82 and Standard Unified Contract for domestic workers.

25 Labour Law, No. 14/2004, article 82 and Standard Unified Contract for domestic workers.

26 Labour Law, No. 14/2004, article 109. However in the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), the Employer is obliged to bear all costs of appropriate medical treatment. Employer shall also pay an unspecified amount of compensation. QFC Employment Regulations (Version 7, June 2020), article 51.

27 Standard Unified Contract for domestic workers.

<p>OLD-AGE, NATURAL DISABILITY, DEATH AND SURVIVORS' BENEFIT INSURANCE COVERAGE</p>	<p>No old-age, natural disability, death or survivors' benefits are provided for by law. However, there is a statutory benefit of an end-of-service gratuity that is calculated as follows:</p> <p>At least three weeks of basic salary per year to a worker who has completed employment of one year or more. The worker shall be entitled to a gratuity for fractions of a year in proportion to the duration of employment.²⁸</p>	<p>No old-age, natural disability, death or survivors' benefits are provided for by law. However, there is a statutory benefit of an end-of-service gratuity that is calculated as follows:</p> <p>At least three weeks of basic salary per year to a worker who has been employed for one year or more. The worker shall be entitled to a gratuity for fractions of a year in proportion to the duration of employment.²⁹</p>
<p>MATERNITY LEAVE AND PROTECTION</p>	<p>Maternity leave – After one year of service, a female employee has the right to 50 days of maternity leave with full pay, with at least 35 of those days coming after the delivery. An additional 60 days of unpaid leave may be taken in the event of post-delivery health issues that hinder return to work.³⁰</p> <p>Maternity protection – An employer cannot terminate an employee during maternity leave.³¹</p>	<p>Not specified by law.</p>

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

<p>ABILITY TO JOIN TRADE UNIONS</p>	<p>Although worker committees are permitted at establishments in which the number of Qatari workers is 100 or more, only Qatari workers may join.³²</p> <p>Joint Committees can be established in companies employing 30 or more workers. Migrant workers may only join these Joint Committees, which are committees at the enterprise level that include equal numbers of worker and management-level representatives. The worker representatives are selected by the workers through direct election.³³</p>
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GRIEVANCES AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

<p>LODGING COMPLAINTS/ RESOLVING DISPUTES</p>	<p>Conciliation</p> <p>Workers can submit their dispute to the MOL for amicable settlement. Workers can also submit their complaints through the online Unified Platform for Complaints and Whistleblowers. Where complaints cannot be resolved amicably, the worker can lodge a case with the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee.³⁴</p> <p>Special procedure for dismissed workers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A dismissed worker must submit a written “grievance” to the employer within seven days of being informed of the dismissal. 2) The employer has seven days to respond. 3) If the worker disagrees with the employer’s response or the employer does not respond, the worker has seven days to lodge their grievance with the MOL. 4) If either the worker or the employer disagrees with the MOL’s decision, they can request that the matter be transferred to the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee. <p>Judicial remedies</p> <p>In cases where an amicable solution is not reached, the MOL submits the case to the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee.³⁵ The legislation requires that the Committee settle the case within 3 weeks from the date of the first session for the settlement of the dispute.³⁶ It is possible to appeal against the decision issued by the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee before the Appellate Court. The Committee meets three times a week. It is chaired by judges of the First Instances Court and two representatives from the MOL. Workers are exempt from court fees. Hearings are held in Arabic.</p>
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28 Labour Law, No. 14/2004, article 109.

29 Law No. 15 of 2017 Concerning Domestic Workers, article 15.

30 Labour Law, No. 14 of 2004, article 96.

31 Labour Law, No. 14 of 2004, article 98.

32 Labour Law, No. 14 of 2004, article 116. Committees in the same industry are entitled to form a general committee (for example, the General Committee for the Workers of Trade and Industry), which in turn can form into a general union (such as the General Union of the Workers of Qatar).

33 Labour Law, No. 14 of 2004, Chapter 13.

34 Law No. 13 of 2017 which amends several provisions of the Labour Law promulgated by Law No. 14 of 2004; and Law No. 13 of 1990 which promulgates the Civil and Commercial Proceedings Law (Law No. 13 of 2017).

35 Created in 2018 by Council of Ministers Decision No. 6.

36 Law No. 13 of 2017, article 115 bis/2.

	<p>In cases where the Labour Dispute Resolution Committee has reached a decision requiring an employer to pay, but this payment is not forthcoming, the worker can apply for payment of entitlements upon termination of service through the Workers Support and Insurance Fund.³⁷</p> <p>Collective disputes</p> <p>The Labour Law, No. 14 of 2014, allows for collective disputes (article 128). Collective labour disputes are described as every dispute between the employer and all or some of their workers, or between a group of employers and all or some of their workers related to a common interest of all or part of the workers in a certain establishment, profession or trade.</p> <p>Practical information about the process of filing complaints is available here, as well as in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQ for workers and • FAQ for employers.
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<p>SHELTERS AND PROTECTION SERVICES</p>	<p>Two shelters provide accommodation and social services for victims of trafficking. They are: (i) the Dar al-Aman al-Shamil (Aman) shelter, attached to the Foundation for Protection and Social Rehabilitation; and (ii) the Humanitarian Care Home. Workers are admitted to the shelters based on an assessment by several authorities, principally the Ministry of Interior, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking and the Ministry of Labour. Workers can submit complaints via the website of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, or through the Security Department as an ordinary criminal complaint.³⁸</p>
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SPONSORSHIP

<p>SPONSORSHIP AND CHANGING EMPLOYERS</p>	<p>With permission of employer</p> <p>Anytime. Changing to another sponsor/employer is allowed at any time during the validity of the residence permit or within 90 days of the expiration of the residence permit.³⁹ Notice periods apply as per below.</p> <p>Without permission of employer</p> <p>Anytime. Changing to another sponsor/employer is allowed at any time during the validity of the residence permit or within 90 days of the expiration of the residence permit.</p> <p>If they wish to change employer during the probation period, workers must give one month’s notice through the MOL’s electronic system, and the future employer must pay the current employer a portion of the recruitment fees and one-way air ticket as compensation, not exceeding two months of the worker’s basic wage. If the worker wants to terminate the contract without observing such notice periods, the worker shall pay the employer a compensation in lieu of notice, equivalent to the worker’s basic wage for the notice period or the remaining part of the notice period.</p> <p>If a worker wishes to change employer after the probation period, the worker must give notice of one or two months, depending on their length of service, through the MOL’s electronic system.</p>
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³⁷ Law No. 17 of 2018 Establishing the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund.

³⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Information Received from Qatar on Follow-up to the Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Report, CEDAW/C/QAT/2, 2021.

³⁹ Executive Regulations of Law No. 21 of 2015 Regulating the Entry, Exit and Residence of Expatriates, article 65.

**“UNEXPLAINED
ABSENCE”/
ABSCONDING**

An employer can file an absconding report within 14 days from the date the worker left the employer or if the worker abstained from leaving the country following the revocation or expiry of their residence permit.

The employer can file this report using the Ministry of Interior’s electronic Metrash system or by filing a report in person at the Search and Follow-up Department of the Ministry of Interior. In 2022, the reporting system was amended to include additional information that needs to be submitted when filing an absconding report. This includes information on the monthly salary of the worker, whether the employer owes any financial dues to the worker, whether there is a labour complaint, and the worker’s accommodation address. In addition, the employer needs to include details of two “witnesses”.

The complaint is then investigated by the Criminal Evidence and Investigation Department of the Ministry of Interior.

If the employer falsely reports a worker’s absence and it is determined, upon investigation, that the report was malicious, penalties may apply.

If the worker has already filed a labour case against the employer, or a request to change employers, an absence/absconding report can only be filed after the worker’s complaint/request has been examined and resolved.

**LEAVING THE
COUNTRY**

Migrant workers have the right to leave the country temporarily or permanently during their contract period. Exit permits are not required except for a very limited category of workers, depending on the nature of their work.⁴⁰ Domestic workers should inform their employers at least 72 hours prior to exit verbally or in writing; however, approval from the employer is not required.

⁴⁰ Executive Regulations of Law No. 21 of 2015 Regulating the Entry, Exit and Residence of Expatriates, article 7. The number of these workers must not exceed 5 per cent of the workforce of each institution, and exceptions cannot be requested for domestic workers.

Positions for which exit permits may be requested are limited to the following: (a) chief executive and financial officers, who bear primary responsibility for the financial affairs of an establishment, including financial planning, financial risk management, record keeping and financial reporting; (b) director in charge of supervising the daily operations of the business; and (c) director of information and communication technology. If a worker is not able to leave the country, regardless of the reason, he/she can appeal to the Expatriates’ Exit Appeals Committee, which will issue a decision within three working days.