



International
Labour
Organization

Travel Smart – Work Smart

A guide for Indian migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates



Promoting safe migration and protecting migrant workers' rights
ILO Country Office for India



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ARE YOU WORKING OR PLANNING TO WORK IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES?



Information in this booklet can help you feel more secure, work safely and profitably. It will also help you to avoid exploitation or abuse.

Always remember, the best person to look after **your** interests in the United Arab Emirates is **you!**



So travel smart and work smart!

Be informed – be aware

Every day hundreds of people from India – like you – enter the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for work. Most of the newly arrived expatriates join the UAE workforce without experiencing any major problem. But some encounter tough times.

There are ways to avoid these sorts of difficult situations. And if you are being abused, there are people who can help you.



You Have Rights

Regardless of your legal status in a country, you are entitled to the respect and protection of your human rights and to live free from harassment and exploitation.

This guide will inform you about your rights – and your responsibilities – while you are working in the UAE. The information can help you to protect yourself from people who want to take advantage of your situation as a migrant worker.

To start, know the following before travelling to the UAE

- Each of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including the UAE, manages its migrant workforce through the sponsorship, or kafala, system. Within this system, you are under the complete responsibility of your employer (also known as the sponsor, or kafeel), both financially and legally. Your employer is responsible for obtaining a residence permit and providing you with an identity card (Emirates ID card). Thus, your legal status to live and work in the country fully depends on your employer, and you cannot leave or enter the country without the employer's permission. The employer can be either a local citizen or a company.

➤ Workers in the private sectors in the UAE are governed by the Labour Law. If you work in a private company, you are entitled to receive the protections guaranteed by the country's Labour Law. There are exceptions, however. If you are a domestic worker (working in a private house as a maid or gardener), a farm worker, an agricultural worker, a casual worker, an employee of a government department or a member of the armed forces, police or security force, you do not fall under the protection of the Labour Law. This means in terms of work, you are only protected by what is mentioned in the contract with the employer, which is enforceable through a civil court.

➤ Some elements of the kafala system are being reviewed in the UAE. Even though the Government has announced plans to make changes to the kafala system, the decision has yet to be implemented. You need to keep yourself updated.



When you leave India, you must have the following documents with you

- A passport that is valid for a minimum period of six months, with a valid visa from the host country.
- An emigration clearance document provided by the Protector of Emigrants.
- A copy of your valid Indian insurance certificate (Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana).

You only need your passport with the emigration clearance to show the immigration officer in the airport in India. However, you should keep a copy of your:

- job offer letter that has been attested by the Indian Mission; and
 - medical examination report.
- **Leave a copy of your documents with your family or a friend.** Make sure you make copies of all the documents mentioned above and leave a set with your family or a friend in India. Keep a set of copies with you as well. If you have a telephone that takes photos, you should take pictures of all your documents in case your paper copies are lost or damaged.

- ▶ **Check your sponsor/employer details.** Check the exact details (name, address, telephone number) of your sponsor/employer (kafeel) – whether it is a person or a company. If possible, talk to your employer before leaving India. Also, tell your family the name, phone number and address of your employer.
- ▶ **Keep recruitment agency receipts and details.** If you used a recruitment agency, write down its name, address, contact person and number (and give to your family or a friend and keep the information with you). Remember to keep the receipts for all payments made to the agency somewhere safe.
- ▶ **Talk to others before leaving.** Talk to people who are either working in or have worked in the UAE in the recent past to learn basic information about the living and working conditions.

Travelling to Qatar



Money. Always carry some money (in US dollars) while travelling.

Drugs. Carrying drugs and other narcotic substances is subject to harsh punishment in the UAE. You must be extremely careful not to accept any gift or item from anyone, not even from close relatives, when travelling to the UAE.

Medicines. If you need to carry medicines, remember to carry along the doctor's prescription.

Other banned items. Religious literature, liquor, obscene video cassettes or CDs and other obscene literature are banned in the UAE. Carrying such material is subject to punishment.

Upon Arrival

You must be aware of how to make a telephone call. In case no one comes to pick you up at the airport in the UAE, you need to call your employer. If your employer does not respond, call the Indian Embassy.

Contract

Every Indian who works in the UAE should have a contract arranged before departing, with all the necessary details of the work and the provided accommodation and benefits.

- A contract is important because it is a legal document that states the duties and obligations of both your employer and you, the worker. Make sure to keep a copy of the contract with your family or a friend and take a copy with you.
- It is always better to have your job offer letter or contract attested by the Indian Embassy. It should be signed by the employer and an Embassy officer. With this verification, the minimum salary is guaranteed (this entitlement is confirmed on the Indian Embassy website).
- For knowing whether a Recruitment Agent (RA) is registered with the Ministry or not/whether the RA is active or not, please check the section under Recruiting Agents (RAs) on the website of the Government of India (www.moia.gov.in).
- The Indian Ministry of Overseas Affairs maintains a prior-approval list of employers. Check that your employer is on the list which is available on the MOIA website.
- You might be asked to sign the original contract after arriving in the UAE. When you are asked to sign a contract (either in India or the UAE, or both), read it carefully and make sure you understand all the terms mentioned in it before you sign it. If you are unable to read or understand the contract, ask someone you trust to help you review the contract.
- If you are asked to sign a second (the original) contract in the UAE, verify that the content and terms are the same as in the contract you signed in India or that were mentioned to you in India. If in doubt, seek support of the Indian Embassy.
- The UAE Ministry of Labour has an electronic ratification system of labour contracts. You can visit their website (www.mol.gov.ae) for clarification of your contract.



Your employment contract should include the following details

- ▶ Your name, passport number, nationality, profession, qualification, residence.
- ▶ Your employer's name, company address and/or location of your work.
- ▶ Contract commencement date and the terms and conditions of the employment.
- ▶ Duration of the contract and details of the initial probation period (not more than six months).
- ▶ Your job responsibilities and working hours and overtime, if any.
- ▶ Basic salary and allowances, including food and accommodation facilities.
- ▶ How the overtime pay is calculated.
- ▶ Information on medical coverage or insurance.
- ▶ Duration of annual leave and entitled holiday or leave days (medical or maternity leave) and terms for airplane tickets.
- ▶ End-of-service benefits.
- ▶ Termination and renewal terms of the contract.

- ▶ **A limited employment contract (fixed-term contract) is for a maximum period of four years**, whereas the unlimited contract has a commencement date only. Most Indian workers have a contract for a limited term, usually two years, which can be extended only once.
- ▶ **There is no such thing as a “free visa” in the UAE.** Every visa is issued in the name of a sponsor, and you are supposed to work strictly under that sponsor (an individual or company). Any violation will lead to severe legal proceedings, with a hefty fine, imprisonment and deportation.
- ▶ **Your employer must provide you with accommodation that meets your basic needs.** Most employers provide their workers with accommodation facilities for free. Check your contract or inquire with your employer to find out if you are entitled to free accommodation or if you need to pay for it.
- ▶ **As well, most employers provide their workers with food for free or a food allowance.** Check your contract or inquire with your employer to find out if you are entitled to food or if you need to pay for it.

Know the following after reaching the UAE

After you arrive in the UAE, you must undergo a medical examination. If you are declared unfit or fail the medical test, you will be sent back to India.

Your employer must procure medical insurance for you, valid for the duration of your contract, and provide you with a health card (for use in accessing medical services).

Your employer must provide you with a residence permit upon your arrival in the UAE. You can enter the UAE with an entry visa, but your employer must obtain the residence permit after you arrive. You can live and work in the UAE only with a residence permit. You cannot work with other visas, such as a family or dependant visa. You can only be granted a residence permit after your employer has obtained medical insurance for you.

After receiving your residence permit, your employer must obtain an identity card (Emirates ID card) for you. The residence permit and ID card are evidence of your legal status in the UAE.

Your employer cannot make deductions from your wages except in the following cases:

- ▶ if you have taken an advance (deduction at any one time should not be more than 10% of your salary);
- ▶ to pay for an instalment, such as social security and the health insurance scheme, or privileges provided by the employer;
- ▶ if you violate the rules and regulations of the workplace (a fine for single offence should not exceed five days' salary in a month); or
- ▶ if you cause loss, damage or destruction of tools or machinery due to your fault (such deduction must not be more than five days' salary each month).

Your employer cannot reduce your salary for the entire contract duration.

You cannot change your employer or work for another. You must work for the same employer who signed your contract. You will be an irregular worker as soon as you leave



your employer and thus face deportation. If you experience any problems with your employer, contact the Indian Embassy or other organizations listed at the back of this booklet for assistance. You need to keep yourself updated regarding any new rules or regulations.

You are not allowed to join a trade union in the UAE or go on strike.

You should stay in regular contact with your family. Agree that if they do not hear from you within a certain period of time that they should seek help. You are free to communicate with your family and friends during your non-working time. You can buy a SIM card for your telephone once you receive your ID card.



There are several groups of Indian workers in the UAE, some of them based on the home state of the members. You should consider joining one of these groups; keep in contact with them and seek their help in case you encounter any problems.

You need to know if you are hired by an employer who is registered under the Emirates Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs or operating in one of the free zones (established by the UAE Government to promote businesses and investment in the federation). If you are employed in one of the free zones, you can change your employer anytime. In any other case, it is difficult.

If you want to change your employer and you are working outside a free zone, you must obtain a “no-objection certificate” (called the tanazul) from your current employer and an “acceptance letter” from your new employer. Your new employer will then apply for your residence permit. However, if the current employer declines to give you the no-objection certificate, he can terminate your current contract and have your residence permit withdrawn. Be careful! If this happens, you will be banned from working in the UAE for a period of six months and will have to leave the UAE immediately.

You must return to your country once your contract expires. If you are dismissed (fired) or if you are declared unfit for work, you might be repatriated to India. Your employer must provide you with a return airplane ticket, unless you resign or are dismissed. If your contract mentions it, your employer may also provide you an airplane ticket to travel for your annual leave.

You may be able to renew your contract, with the mutual agreement of the employer, at the end of its active period. If so, you must also make sure your passport, visa, residence permit, ID card and medical insurance are also renewed and updated.

Your rights as a migrant worker in the UAE

As a registered migrant worker of any age, you have the right to complain and seek protection if any of your rights are violated or if you have been abused by your employer. If you think you have been cheated, wronged or treated in a way that discriminates against you because you are not a citizen of the UAE, your rights may have been abused. See the contact details at the back of this booklet and seek assistance.

Women and men have the right to receive the same wages when the work is the same. The following explains some of your rights as a migrant worker.

- **You have the right to keep your documents.** Keep your passport, visa, work permit and employment documents with you all the time. Additionally, your employer must give you a residence permit. Do not give the originals to your employer or your recruitment agent, even if they promise to keep it safe. Make sure you photocopy all the new documents and send the copies to your family (or friend) back home. Also keep a copy with you.
- **You are entitled to and can demand the remuneration and the accommodation facilities that are mentioned in the contract.** You also have the right to refuse work that is not mentioned in the contract.
- **You have the right to be paid once a month, on a working day.** Your wages are to be in the local currency (dirham) and your wages are to be deposited into your bank account.
- **You have the right to be paid for work completed even if you are arrested, if you quit your job or if you are dismissed.** Your employer cannot withhold your wages under any circumstance.
- **You have the right to be paid annual leave.** You are entitled to two days leave for every month of employment (if service is between six months and one year) and 30 days if service exceeds one year. Most workers have the right to claim pay for unused leave days. If in doubt, contact one of the groups listed at the back of this booklet for assistance.



- **You have the right to take medical leave.** But you will need a medical certificate from a doctor and you must inform your employer within two days of being absent. You can avail of the discount and privileges of your health card for treatment and medicines at the specified hospitals and clinics. You are provided some treatments free of charge or you may be charged a minimal fee.



- **You have the right to receive 75,000 rupees (INR) if you are hospitalized** due to an emergency through the Indian migrants' insurance scheme (Pravasi Bharatiya BimaYojana).

- **You have the right to receive your income during a period of illness.** You are not entitled to any paid sick leave during the probation period. However, if you work for three months or more after the probation period, you are entitled to a maximum of 90 days sick leave per year—the first 15 days with full wages, the next 30 days at half pay and then the final 45 days without pay. However, if your sickness results from the consumption of alcohol or narcotics, then you are not entitled to any paid sick leave.



- **You have the right to go out of your workplace during your free time.** Make sure you carry your ID card with you at all times. You might be stopped by the police and asked to show it.

- **You have the right to freedom of movement.** Your employer cannot restrict your movement. Your employer does not have the right to lock your room. You have the right to lock your room from the inside.

- **You have the right to one day off each week.** Friday is the weekly holiday in the UAE. You can refuse to work on your day off. If you agree to work on your day off, you are entitled to be paid an additional 50% of the basic wage or a compensatory day off. You may not be made to work for two consecutive Fridays.



- **You have the right to working days off during the official holidays of the UAE with full pay.** There are 10 official public holidays in the UAE in a year.
- **You have the right to rest time of at least one hour per day during working hours.** This rest time must be offered not more than five hours after you started working. Rest time is not counted as part of the working hours.
- **You have the right to refuse to work overtime.** A workday is eight hours and a workweek is 48 hours. If you agree to work more than the normal working hours, your employer is required to pay you overtime (normal working hours pay plus additional 25% of the basic wage; if you work overtime between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., you are entitled to normal working hours pay plus an additional 50% of your basic wage). During Ramadan, normal working hours are reduced by two hours.



If you are a domestic worker, some of the rights explained below may not apply to you. You need to negotiate these with your employer. Although the Labour Law does not cover domestic work, you are entitled to termination notice, unpaid wages protection, payment of your wages into a bank account, accommodation and protection against abuse.



How to defend your rights

- **If your employer breaches the terms and conditions of the employment**, you can file a complaint with the UAE Ministry of Labour (specifically, the Labour Department). For instance, you can file a complaint if your employer delays payment of your wages or does not pay you, makes wrongful deductions from your wages, makes you work extra hours without pay or does not allow you to take the leave entitlement specified in your contract. You can also file a complaint if your employer mistreats you or abuses you physically or sexually. Your complaint must be made within one year of the incident.
- **If you are not received by the employer upon arrival in the UAE**, if there is any substantive change in the job contract or if the employment is prematurely terminated for no fault of yours, the Indian migrants' insurance scheme (PravasiBharatiyaBimaYojana, or PBBY) will reimburse you for the one-way economy class airfare to return to India.
- **If a labour case is pending before a court for the non-payment of wages or overtime pay or for unfair termination by the employer**, the employee can apply to the UAE Ministry of Labour for a temporary job permit. This permit will be for a maximum period of six months or until the end of the case, whichever is earlier, and will be sanctioned only if there is a valid visa for at least six months. (This is another reason why it is important to keep at least one set of copies of all your documents.)
- **Alternatively, you can call the toll-free number (800-665) in the UAE to file a complaint regarding any labour-related issue**, including problems with your contract, work conditions or ID card.
- **If you are insured from India (under the PBBY)**, you are entitled to INR30,000 for legal expenses, provided the necessity of the case is certified by the appropriate UAE Ministry.
- **If you experience any difficulty in filing a complaint to the Labour Department**, you can seek the help of the Indian Embassy or other organizations in the UAE.



- **If you are a domestic worker and experience any difficulty**, seek the help of the Indian Embassy or the police because domestic workers are not protected by the Labour Law. Thus, the Labour Department does not have the authority to provide its services to domestic workers.
- **If you think you have been wrongfully dismissed by your employer**, you have the right to appeal the termination decision to the Labour Department. Your employer can only dismiss you for serious reasons, such as a fault that results in gross loss for your employer, for repeatedly disobeying instructions, other disciplinary issues or being absent from work for more than seven consecutive days without notice.
- **If you are charged for violating the rules and regulations of your workplace**, you are entitled to a written notification of that violation and opportunity to defend yourself. You cannot be charged after 30 days of disclosure of the violation or after 60 days of an investigation.
- **In case of a workplace injury or occupation-related illness for which you are not satisfied with the medical report**, in particular regarding the period of treatment, the extent of a disability or your ability to resume work, the case can be referred to the UAE Ministry of Health through the Labour Department.
- **You are not entitled to join any trade union or to have a trade union represent you in a labour dispute.** If any labour dispute arises, you can approach the Ministry of Labour personally for resolution.
- **If you experience any problems in the UAE**, you may seek the help of the police, the Indian Embassy or one of the organizations listed at the end of this booklet for support. The Government of India runs a 24/7 toll-free helpline (800-46342) in the UAE. The Indian Embassy in the UAE has two websites for registering migrant workers' details; please go to www.uaeindians.org/registration.aspx or www.cgidubai.com/register
- **The UAE Ministry of Labour has also set up a telephone hotline to receive complaints from workers.** If you are in the UAE, you can call toll-free at 800-665. For international callers, dial 00-971-4-214-8000.



Filing a complaint with the Ministry of Labour

You can file a complaint at the Ministry of Labour (specifically, the Labour Department) if

- your sponsor retains your passport without your consent;
 - your wages are not paid for more than two months and/or are not paid into your bank account;
 - there are wrongful deductions from your salary;
 - your overtime work is not paid;
 - you are not allowed to take rest on your rest day;
 - your employer refuses to give annual leave and an air ticket to your home country;
 - your employer refuses to provide a pay slip with details of your wages, overtime calculation and any deductions;
 - you do not have an employment contract, labour card or residence permit; or
 - there is an incident of assault or sexual harassment from the employer or his/her family member (if this happens, immediately complain to the police).
- **In India, Complaints for any foreign employment-related issues can be made with the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs.** If you have been deceived by your agent in India by sending you to a job that is different from what is stated in your contract or the terms and conditions of work differ from what was agreed upon or you are not sent abroad after paying the agent money, you, your family or a friend can file a complaint with the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. Complaints can be filed even if you are abroad. You can also call the Government of India's **toll-free number: 1-800-11-3090** (for MTNL/BSNL) or the **hotline number: 00-91-114-050-3090** to file a complaint. This service is available in 11 languages.
- **If you are stranded in the UAE or are unable to return to India, you can seek the help of the Indian Embassy for rescue and repatriation.** If you are a domestic worker, you may even be entitled to boarding and lodging through the Indian Community Welfare Fund. This Fund also provides emergency medical care, legal assistance and financial assistance for flight expenses. The Fund can also be used for airlifting the mortal remains to India or local cremation/burial of a deceased worker overseas if the sponsor is unable or unwilling to pay (if required by the contract) and the family is unable to pay the expense.

Your responsibilities as a migrant worker in the UAE

If you experience problems at work, talk to your family, a friend, your employer or to the recruitment agency first. If the problem is not resolved, you should contact the Labour Welfare Officer in the Indian Embassy, the UAE Labour Department or any diaspora organization listed at the back of this booklet for help.

- If you want to take leave from your job (for personal reason or vacation), make sure you inform your employer beforehand. Taking an extended leave without telling your employer could be cause for terminating your contract.
- Take care of your health. If you are sick and cannot go to work, go for a check-up and take a rest. But remember to inform your employer or supervisor as soon as possible and obtain a medical certificate (report) after the check-up.
- Many workers die from cardiac arrest due to simultaneous exposure to extreme heat and extreme cold. If you work outdoors, do not turn the air conditioner very high immediately after returning to your room.
- Take precautions to avoid contacting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Do not consume illegal drugs or alcohol; and do not gamble or engage in political activities. These activities are banned and considered unlawful in the UAE.
- You must abide by the rules and regulations of your workplace. The regulations typically are displayed in a visible area in the workplace.
- You must make an effort to learn the basic norms and laws of the UAE, including traffic rules. For example, you must always use the zebra crossing or the overhead bridge to cross a road.



- You must respect the culture and religion of the UAE and never make any negative remarks about the religion. Muslims fast for a month during Ramadan. During this time, do not eat, drink (even water) or smoke in public during the day.
- If you learn the language—Arabic—it will benefit you.
- You should be respectful to women and never tease them, ogle or stare at them.
- You must check the expiry dates of your documents, including passport, residence permit and ID card. To renew your passport, go to the Indian Embassy; for other documents, inform your employer well in advance of their expiration date.
- You can send money back to your family through a bank or money transfer company, such as the International Money Express (IME), Western Union and Moneygram. It is not safe to remit through the hundi system or send money with another person unless you completely trust that person.
- You may also directly deposit your earnings into your or your family's bank account in India. It will benefit you as savings when you return.

Know your status


Am I a regular migrant worker?

A regular migrant requires a passport, visa and work permit. You can receive these by entering the UAE through a licensed recruitment agency based in India or even individually by following the necessary procedures. If you do not have these documents, the UAE Government will regard you as an irregular worker; it is illegal then for you to work in the UAE. Seek help from one of the organizations listed at the back of this booklet.



When your contract finishes, if you are dismissed or if you do not obtain a medical certificate upon first entering the country, you might be repatriated back to India.

Your rights as a regular migrant worker

- **You have the right to travel anywhere within the UAE.** However, it is best to inform your employer if you plan to travel and always keep your Emirates ID card with you.
 - **Your employer must arrange health insurance coverage for you from the Dubai or Abu Dhabi Health Authority.** The schemes will cover visits to a general practitioner, emergency treatments and referrals to specialists as well as surgical, investigative and maternity procedures. Domestic workers are also covered under this scheme.
- 
- The illustration shows a woman in a pink uniform and headscarf, likely a domestic worker, cleaning a bathroom. She is using a long-handled brush to clean the floor. The bathroom contains a sink, a mirror, a bathtub, and a toilet.
- **You should be insured by the Insurance Scheme under the Workmen's Compensation Act (Chapter 8 of Federal Law No. 1980) called ISHAD (Insurance System for Advancing Healthcare in Dubai).** It entitles you to a fairly comprehensive benefit plan if you suffer a workplace injury or illness. Benefits include coverage for lost wages, rehabilitation and medical expenses and death benefits.
 - **Workers who suffer a permanent disability or die while abroad are liable for compensation from the Indian migrants' insurance scheme (PBBY).** For a disability, the amount of compensation depends on the degree of severity. However, no insurance will be paid in cases in which a worker intentionally injured himself/herself. In case of an injury, the employer must inform the police immediately. You may also report the incident to the police. The same information also must be reported to the Labour Department.
 - **If you suffer from a work-related injury or occupational illness,** you have the right to receive wages for the entire treatment period requested by a doctor. However, after the first six months, you are entitled to only half your wages for the next six months or until recovery or disability is proven, whichever is shorter. You can also receive INR 75,000 for hospitalization from the Indian migrants' insurance scheme (PBBY).
 - **You or your heir is also entitled to a minimum of INR 1 million for a permanent disability or death,** provided you have enrolled in the PBBY insurance scheme through the Protector of Emigrants office in India.

Labour disputes

- If you experience a dispute with the sponsor regarding non-payment of wages, leave, end-of-service benefits or some other work-related issue, you can contact the Labour and Social Welfare Wing of the Indian Embassy to sort out the problem. An Embassy official will assist by trying to resolve the problem first by correspondence and discussion with the sponsor. If no agreement or settlement is reached, the matter is taken up through the UAE Ministry of Labour. If the matter remains unresolved, you must then file a case with the Labour Court.



If you are stopped or arrested by the police

- If you are stopped by a police officer for a random check, give your name, address and other details asked for and show your residence permit, if asked.
- Do not allow the police officer to put his/her hands into your pockets or bags. If asked to search your possessions, voluntarily take out your belongings yourself one by one in front of the officer, stating the name of each item as it is removed. When your pockets and bags are empty, turn them inside out.
- Only a female officer can do a body search on a female. It must be carried out with decency. The officer is not allowed to touch your private parts.
- The police can arrest you on suspicion of committing a crime (such as theft, murder or selling drugs), for breaking the immigration rules (overstaying, staying without regular status) or for not being in possession of your ID card. You can be arrested for other activities that are considered illegal and punishable as per Islamic (Sharia) law, including public intoxication or other alcohol-related offences, homosexuality, intimacy in public between a man and a woman or any attempt to convert a person's religion.
- Ask why you are being arrested, but do not resist. If you are arrested, you have the right to contact the Indian Embassy for support. You can also contact your employer, a relative, a friend, a lawyer or other individuals or organizations for support.
- If you have been detained at a police station, you might be released pending a trial if you deposit your passport with the police or if a friend deposits their passport as a guarantee. Please remember that if you deposit your passport to release a friend from detention and they do not turn up for the trial, it will put you in trouble. You will not be arrested, but you will be stuck in the UAE until you get your passport back from the police, which could take a long time.

- Try to avoid admitting to anything or signing any documents that you do not understand.
- If you are arrested for an offence, the interrogation police have 48 hours to refer you to the public prosecutor.

If you are taken to a court

- Ask for your court case number and a copy of your charge sheet if you are arrested without a warrant. You have the right to know the charges against you.
- You have the right to be represented by legal counsel. Ask for a lawyer or assistance from the Indian Embassy. Legal proceedings in the UAE are conducted in Arabic. Ask for an interpreter.
- Take time to understand the charges and the punishment/penalty for the charge.
- Do not plead guilty if you do not understand the charges. If you want to plead guilty, you have the right to mitigate for a minimum sentence and NO whipping.

Know your rights after arrest and during detention

- If you are detained or arrested, you will be questioned and asked to give a statement. Note the name and the rank of the police officer questioning you if you decide to give a statement.
- You are not obliged to provide a statement to the police, especially without any legal counsel with you.
- You are only obliged to give your full name, age, address and occupation.
- Information that you give to the police can be used as evidence against you in court if you are charged.
- You have the right to remain silent, until the arrival of your lawyer.
- You have the right to contact your family, a friend, a lawyer or the Indian Embassy or Consulate.



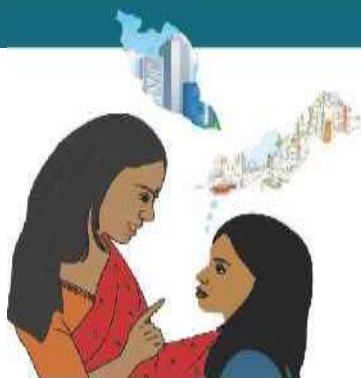
Special notes for female migrants

- ✔ You are entitled to the same wage as male migrants performing the same job. Women cannot be employed from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m., except as a domestic worker.
- Women in domestic work are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Make sure you have the contact number of the Indian Embassy and that you immediately request support in case of a problem.
- In case you experience a problem that forces you to leave your employer, you can temporarily remain in the shelter home run by the Indian Embassy in Dubai while waiting to return to India.
- The Indian Government bans women younger than 30 from migrating for domestic work. If you are younger than 30, please contact the Indian Embassy or its telephone hotline.



Special notes for young migrants

- Children younger than 15, including migrants, are not allowed to work in the UAE. If you are underage and on your own (unaccompanied or not with a family member) seek help, such as with the Labour and Social Welfare Officer at your Embassy. Do not lie about your age if the authorities ask you (and do not falsify your age in any document).



Ways to keep safe

- **Be careful of anyone who befriends you with promises of an easy job with goodpay**—they could be lying to you.
- **Be careful of anyone who offers to help you find other work or offers you a better job**—they might be earning a commission to recruit you and this could mean that your best interests are not their top priority.
- **Be careful of anyone who demands to keep your passport or identification documents**—this leaves you vulnerable because you need these documents to move around. Never leave your passport with a broker or an employer—your passport is your personal possession and you have the right to hold it yourself.
- **Do not trust strangers! Even friendly ones**—male or female. However, do try to make some friends among other Indian migrant workers.
- **Learn your way around.** Find the location of the nearest religious centres as well as police stations, hospitals and help centres. These places can offer you sanctuary if you are in trouble.
- **Do not trust a broker who tells you he/she can register you with the authorities or get you a work permit.** If you are already legally registered with your UAE employer and hold a valid work permit with that employer, it is your employer's responsibility to help you renew it.



Getting help

Phoning home. If you are living in the UAE and want to phone home, first dial 0091 and then your local area code and number. To dial a mobile number, dial 0091 and then the 10-digit mobile number.

Everyone is entitled to receive help, regardless of their situation!

If you do not understand anything in this booklet or if you need help but are afraid to approach authorities, you may contact one of the organizations listed here for assistance without fear of arrest or deportation.



Register with the Indian Embassy or Consulate

Once you arrive in the UAE, it is best to register with the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi or the Consulate General's Office in Dubai, so that in case of need or when you are in distress, the Embassy officials are able to help you.

Embassy of India

P.O. Box 4090
Abu Dhabi, UAE
Tel: 00-97-12-449-2700
Email: info@indembassyuae.org
Website: www.indembassyuae.com

Consulate General of India

PAI Hamariya
Diplomatic Enclave
Bur Dubai
P.O.Box 737
Dubai, UAE
Tel: 00-97-14-397-1222; 00-97-14-397-1333
Email: cgidubai@cgidubai.com

For women or housemaids in distress	Website: www.cgidubai.com Hotline: 00-97 -14-205-5600 Death formalities on holidays and after office hours hotline: 050-734-7676
Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC)	15L, Silver Tower, Cluster-I P.O. Box 62494 Jumeirah Lakes Towers Dubai, UAE Tel: 00-971-4-434-0899
Death Formalities on holidays and after office hours	Helpline: 800-46342 (800-India) SMS: 00-97-15 -5870-3725 Website: www.iwrcuae.in Email: help@iwrcuae.in Tel: 00- 97-050-7347676
Indian Community Welfare Committee (ICWC)	Tel: 00-97-14-397-3939 Email: contact@icwcdubai.com
IVS Global helpline number for Attestation	Tel: 00 – 97 – 04 -3579585 / 04-3579636

Non-government agencies

Red Crescent Society of UAE

P.O. Box 3324
Abu Dhabi, UAE
Tel: 00-97-12-641-9000
Web: www.rcuae.ae
Email: callcenter@rcuae.ae

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Bainuna 109293
Al Bateen Area
Villa 3, Street 14
Abu Dhabi, UAE
Tel: 00-97-12-667-7668
Email: khair@unhcr.org

Government authorities

Ministry of Labour of the UAE

The Ministry of Labour (MOL) or its Labour Department in Dubai governs all work-related issues. The Ministry is responsible for issuing work permits (labour cards) and imposing labour bans. An exception to this is the labour permit for housemaids; they are processed at the Immigration Department along with their residence permit.

Note that an Employment Entry Permit (often called an “employment visa”) is not a labour card or work permit—it is an entry permit issued by the Immigration Department for entry into the UAE temporarily (30 days). It allows the holder to work for the designated employer while the employer arranges the processing of the labour card and residence permit (residence visa). However, the Immigration Department does not issue the entry permit until the Ministry has approved (not issued) a work permit for the worker. This is why it takes a few weeks to get things organized.

Telephone 800-665 toll-free in the UAE (00-971-4-214-8000 for international callers) for any labour-related issues, including contracts, work conditions, labour cards and work permits.

Or email: callcenter@mol.gov.ae

Ministry of Labour

P.O. Box 809

Al Salam Street, Al Matar

Near to Khalifa Park

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Tel: 00-97-12-418-3888, 00-97-12-681-1890

Labour Offices and service centres across the UAE

Ministry of Labour (an operator will guide you to the correct office)	00-97-14-702-3333
Labour Relations Office in Dubai Court	00-97-14-303-0570
Labour Relations Office—Sharjah Court	00-97-16-501-2371

UAE Helpline telephone numbers

Police	999
Labour complaints (Ministry of Labour)	800-665 and 00-97-14-313-9900
Ministry of Labour (international call centre)	00-97-14-214-8000
Visa-related questions and inquiries	800-5111 (toll free)
For victim of trafficking	800-5005
Victim Support Programme	800-8989
UAE Red Crescent	800-733
Ministry of Justice	800-333-333
Shelters for Women and Children	800-7283
Dubai Police Call Centre	901
Sharjah Police Emergency	00-97-16-563-3333
Ajman Police Emergency	00-97-16-740-9999
Fujairah Police Emergency	00-97-19-222-4411
Umm Al Quwain Police Emergency	00-97-16-765-6677
Ras Al Khaimah Police Emergency	00-97-17-235-6666

Cultural organizations registered with the Indian Embassy

The Indian expatriate community is reportedly the largest ethnic community in UAE, constituting about 30% of the country's population. The UAE has a system of registering social organizations of the expatriate community and, within the UAE Government guidelines, such associations can function freely. There are five registered Indian associations in Abu Dhabi and one each in the other six Emirates. The registered associations are umbrella organizations and smaller cultural or ethnic groups (affiliated to the registered associations) function under them. These associations take care of the welfare of the Indian community and conduct cultural and welfare activities regularly, including sports activities. For more details, go to: www.uaeindians.org.

Organization	Contact address
INDIA SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CENTRE	P.O. Box 816 Meena St, Abu Dhabi, UAE Tel: 00-97 -12-673-0066

Organization	Contact address
INDIAN ASSOCIATION SHARJAH	P.O.Box 2324, Sharjah, UAE Tel: 00-97-16-561-0845, 00-97-16-561-0294 Website: www.iassharjah.com Email: mail@iassharjah.com
ABU-DHABI MALAYALI SAMAJAM	P.O.Box 2779, Abu Dhabi, UAE Tel: 00-97-12-553-7600
KERALASOCIAL CENTRE	P.O. Box 3584 (opposite Sabaiya Post Office) Madinath Zayed, Abu Dhabi, UAE Tel: 00-97-12-631-4455; 00-97-12-631-4456
INDIA-ISLAMIC CENTRE	P.O.Box 4190, Abu Dhabi, UAE Tel: 00-97-12-642-4488 Email: iic@emirates.net.ae
INDIAN LADIES ASSOCIATION	P.O. Box 3660 Abu Dhabi, UAE Tel: 00-97-12-633-0182
INDIAN ASSOCIATION RAS AL-KHAIMA	Al Mamourah, P.O. Box 4943, Ras Al-Khaima, UAE Tel: 00-97-17-228-8345
INDIAN ASSOCIATION AJMAN	P.O.Box 1632, Ajman, UAE Tel: 00-97-16-747-4212 Fax: 00-97-16-747-4213 Email: iaajman@emirates.net.ae
INDIAN ASSOCIATION UMMALQUWAIN	Old Town, Umm Al Quwain, UAE Tel: 00-97-16-765-5571

Organization	Contact address
INDIAN SOCIAL CENTRE AJMAN	P.O.Box12882 Ajman, UAE Tel: 00-97-16 7459549 Email: iscajman@gmail.com
INDIAN ISLAHI CENTRE	Al Dhafrah Abu Dhabi, UAE Tel: 00-97-12-641-4311
KERALA MUSLIM CULTURAL CENTRE (KMCC)	MAIN OFFICE Al Baraha (behind Dubai Hospital) P.O. Box55576 Dubai, UAE Email: info@dubaikmcc.org Tel: 00-97-14-272-7773
MAHARASHTRA MANDAL	P.O. Box 2286 Abu Dhabi, UAE Tel mobile: 00-97- 15 -591-3062
THE RASAMAYI TELUGU CULTURAL FORUM	P.O. Box 211893 Dubai, UAE Email: info@rasamayiuae.com
TELUGU ASSOCIATION	P.O. Box16482 Dubai, UAE Tel(office): 00-97-14-66-0453 Tel(residence): 00-97-14-66-6752
KANRATAKA SANGH	P.O. Box9081 Dubai, UAE Fax: 00-97-14-348-2988
TAMILNADU CULTURAL ASSOCIATION	P.O. Box5826 Dubai, UAE Fax: 00-97-14-343-4466

You have rights – and responsibilities!

Knowing your rights and responsibilities can help you avoid abuse and help you make the most of your time in the United Arab Emirates.

Be aware!

This booklet gives you advice on how to live and work safely in the United Arab Emirates and what to do if you need help.

Travel Smart – Work Smart!



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