

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Intramuros, Manila

DEPARTMENT ADVISORY NO. 01
Series of 2014

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT Administrative Service Central Records Section-356
DATE: <u>5/9/14</u>
TIME: <u>11:00</u>
RECEIVED BY: <u>Mylene</u>

**Occupational Safety and Health Protection Tips
for *Kasambahays* and Employers (OSH Tips)**

Pursuant to Section 12 of Rule V of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 10361, otherwise known as the "Domestic Workers Act" or "*Batas Kasambahay*", this Occupational Safety and Health Protection Tips for *Kasambahays* and Employers (OSH Tips) is hereby issued.

I. BACKGROUND

Domestic work, like any occupation, has its own set of occupational hazards from which the *Kasambahay* and members of the household should be protected from.

It is the employer's responsibility to provide protection to the *Kasambahay*, especially in the maintenance of safe and healthy working conditions. The *Kasambahay*, however, equally shares responsibility in ensuring that household work is safe and healthy. Thus, this OSH Tips has been developed for both the *Kasambahay* and the employer.

The OSH Tips presents and addresses: (a) fundamental safety and health principles; (b) preventive measures to reduce the extent of exposure to hazards that may cause accident, injury, or illness; and (c) safety and health concerns associated with typical tasks performed and the working conditions of the *Kasambahay* in the Philippines.

II. OSH TIPS FOR THE EMPLOYER

1. Conduct on-the-job orientation of the *Kasambahay* on:
 - a. General layout of the house to include location of main switch, all emergency and fire exits, and location of fire extinguisher;
 - b. Location of the nearest hospital, police station, barangay hall, fire station, and DOLE office;
 - c. Emergency procedures (fire, earthquake, flood, theft, etc.); and
 - d. Proper use of fire protection equipment, household fire safety measures, basic emergency procedure to contain fire, evacuation, and contact of proper authority or the nearest firefighting unit or station.
2. Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) based on the nature of the job such as gloves, face masks, and aprons to the *Kasambahay*,

3. Ensure that fire protective equipment and other materials such as fire extinguishers, wet blanket, sand, and water are readily available to the *Kasambahay*;
4. Provide humane sleeping arrangements, adequate food, safe drinking water, and access to sanitary facilities to the *Kasambahay*,
5. Make available first-aid medicines to the *Kasambahay* in case of illnesses and injuries sustained during service without loss of benefits; and
6. Ensure that the *Kasambahay* will not work under hazardous conditions that will endanger his or her health and safety.

III. OSH TIPS FOR THE KASAMBAHAY

A. General Household Safety Tips

1. Safety in housekeeping

The *Kasambahay* shall at all times observe care in the use of household tools and appliances by:

- a. Keeping all household appliances and equipment clean and sanitary.
- b. Properly storing all cleaning materials and equipment.

2. Lifting

Joint and muscle pains, particularly in the low back and upper extremities, can be prevented by observing these proper procedures:

- a. Proper posture when lifting objects
 1. Stand as close as possible to the object before lifting.
 2. Use your leg muscles and not your back when lifting. When lifting an object from the floor, squat or bend the knees with one knee resting on the floor.
 3. Hold the object firmly and close to the body.
 4. Slowly stand up while keeping the back straight. Avoid jerky movements.
- b. Properly pace the performance of tasks to avoid repeated lifting over a short period.

3. Working at heights

a. Use of ladders or stepping stool

1. Use a solid or stable stepping stool or ladder when cleaning objects above the head level.
2. Keep the ladder clean and in good condition before every use.
 - If there is any doubt on the structure or stability of a ladder, the *Kasambahay* should inform the employer immediately.

3. Always maintain the three points of contact when using ladders. "Three points of contact" means both feet and one hand are always in contact with the ladder or stepladder.
 4. Always face the ladder when climbing up or down, gripping two sides with both hands to maintain a three-point contact.
 5. Do not stretch the body to reach spots on either side of the ladder. Move the ladder to the preferred position instead.
- b. Use the designated laundry and clothes-drying areas in high rise buildings.
 - c. Clean windows accessible from inside the house.
 - d. Use a tool with a long handle when performing cleaning tasks to avoid overreaching or overstretching the body.
4. Use of household chemicals

Various chemicals are often used for housework such as detergents, solvents, and bleach. Insecticides are frequently used to kill usual household pests such as mosquitoes, cockroaches, ants, etc. In general, these chemicals are potential hazards and any improper use may affect the health or lead to accident.

- a. The following must be observed at all times when using chemicals:
 1. Handle household chemicals with caution and always take note of potential hazards. Keep them away from fire and children. Read the labels thoroughly and follow the method of use and safety measures recommended by the manufacturer.
 2. To avoid mixing with food and beverages, store chemicals in a designated area which must be shaded, cool, dry, and well ventilated.
 3. Always keep chemicals in their original container and store them tightly capped in a locked cabinet, out of the reach of children and pets. The container must be securely covered at all times.
 4. Ensure good ventilation at the area of work when using chemicals by keeping windows and doors open.
 5. Personal protective gear such as gloves and aprons must be worn properly.
 - The employer must provide for these PPEs at no cost to the *Kasambahay*.
 6. Wash hands thoroughly after handling of chemicals.
 7. Know the proper first-aid or emergency care for each and every chemical to be used in the household.
 8. Never eat, drink, or smoke when handling or applying chemicals.
 9. Practice good personal hygiene. Change clothes and take a shower after every use of pesticides and other chemicals.
- b. Follow these emergency measures in case of exposure to household chemicals:
 1. Take off contaminated clothes.
 2. To prevent inhalation of chemical, open windows or turn on exhaust fans. Do not stay inside the contaminated room.

3. If the chemical comes in contact with the eyes, flush the eye with clean running water for a minimum of 15 minutes. Avoid contaminating the unexposed eye while rinsing.
4. Wash off the chemicals on the skin for at least 15 minutes.
5. In case of accidental chemical ingestion, seek immediate medical assistance. Bring the chemical container to the doctor. DO NOT induce vomiting unless the instruction on the chemical label states that it is an acceptable first-aid measure.

c. Seeking medical assistance

In case of injury, exposure to chemicals, or other situations considered as a medical emergency, the *Kasambahay* should immediately inform the employer so that the latter can make arrangements for the needed medical assistance.

5. Use of electrical appliances

Electric stove, vacuum cleaners, floor polishers, flat iron, microwave, and rice cookers are some of the electrical appliances seen in many homes today. Their proper use is important for the safety of the *Kasambahay* and the family. Many accidents are caused by faulty, poorly maintained, or improperly operated appliances. The following measures can reduce the risk of electric shock and fire:

- a. Read the manual before using the appliances.
- b. Electric wires and plugs must be checked first for damages before using any cleaning appliance. Never use an appliance with a frayed cord or broken plug.
- c. Use the nearest wall-mounted socket to avoid overextending the wire.
- d. When unplugging, grip the plug and never pull the wire. Do not unplug the socket with wet hands.
- e. Avoid using electrical appliances (e.g., microwave oven, washing machine, iron, and television) at the same time to prevent overloading of electrical circuit.
- f. Unplug all appliances, especially the flat iron, when not in use.
- g. All electrical installations, connections, and repairs must be carried out by qualified electricians.

6. Avoiding slips and trips

Slipping on wet or oily floors and tripping over electrical wires, cords, toys, and other objects scattered on the floor are common accidents in homes. Here are some safety measures:

- a. Clear working area of unnecessary objects. Keep toys and other objects in their proper place or store immediately after use.
- b. Keep the floor clean and dry at all times. Water or any spillage on the floor must be immediately wiped off.
- c. Place anti-slip mats at the entrance of the kitchen and washroom to prevent slipping when walking on wet feet or shoes.

B. Kitchen Safety Tips

1. Proper Use of Cooking Appliances

a. Stoves Using LPG and Kerosene

1. Read the manual before using the stove.
2. Always check for gas or kerosene leaks. Inspect the gas hose, gas regulator, or kerosene container for damage. Do not use the stove if there are signs of leaks or damage.
3. Ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using the stove.
4. Turn off the gas regulator after cooking or when the stove is not in use.

b. Electrical stove

1. For four-burner stoves, use the outer burners when cooking food that needs to be checked or stirred frequently or when adding ingredients with different cooking time.
2. After cooking, see to it that you turn off the stove properly.

c. Use of charcoal and wood

1. Do not use gasoline or kerosene as starter fluid.
2. Cook in a well-ventilated area away from flammable materials.
3. When adding more charcoal or wood, use long-handle tongs to prevent burns.
4. Put out the fire after cooking.

2. Hot surface and hot liquids

- a. Do not clean the stove or oven while it is still hot to prevent burns and injury.
- b. Use oven mitts and potholders to handle hot pots and pans and prevent burns.
- c. When cooking, food ingredients should be kept dry before deep frying and adjust the flame to a suitable level to keep it from getting too strong and to avoid splash over.

3. Knives

- a. Always store knives in a secure area.
- b. Always pay attention in using a knife or any sharp object to prevent cuts and injuries.

4. Food safety

- a. Store cooked food separately from raw food to avoid contamination.
- b. Do not eat or serve spoiled food or food past their expiration dates. Discard food that smells or tastes bad.
- c. Observe personal hygiene while preparing food.
- d. Wash hands thoroughly.
- e. Use hair nets and apron when cooking.

C. Fire Safety Tips

It is recommended that firefighting equipment and material such as dry type portable fire extinguisher and fire blanket are mounted in the kitchen area where fire hazard is high.

1. Safety in Handling Sources of Fire

- a. Observe "no smoking" inside the house.
 1. Where smoking is permitted, adequate ashtrays must be provided and smoking materials properly disposed.
- b. Observe good housekeeping and avoid accumulation of combustible materials such as paper that constitutes undue fire hazard.

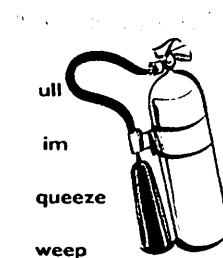
2. In Case of Fire:

- a. Do not panic. Be calm, but act quickly.
- b. In small fires, use any of the following to extinguish the fire:
 1. Wet rug or fire blanket
 2. Pail of water
 3. Fire extinguisher (preferably "ABC" fire extinguisher)
- c. Call for help immediately.
- d. Leave the house or building immediately when the fire takes hold. Do not use elevators.
- e. Do not go back inside the burning house or building once you are already out from it.

3. Proper Use of Fire Fighting Equipment

Follow and remember the word PASS:

- P - Pull the pin
- A - Aim the nozzle to the base of fire
- S - Squeeze the trigger
- S - Sweep the nozzle side by side



4. When Cooking Pans Catch Fire

- a. When LPG tank hose is on fire, turn the valves off immediately.
- b. Do not touch the pan with your bare hands in an effort of transferring it somewhere else.
- c. Do not throw water on it. Throwing water on it will only spread the fire and worsen the situation.
- d. To put off the fire, cover the pan with a metal plate by sliding it from one end, then pushing sideways across the pan.

5. When Clothes Catch Fire

- a. Stay in place. Do not run.

- b. Cover face and mouth, lie on the floor, and roll from side to side until all the flames are out then take off the clothes.

6. When One Experiences Electric Shock

- a. Always turn off the main power source first before extending further help to the victim.
- b. If the source is out of reach, stand on a dry insulating material such as rubber, then push the victim away from the electric source by using wooden materials like chairs and mop holders.
- c. Never attempt to touch the victim with bare hands if you are not sure that the power source is off.
- d. If an electrical switch is burning, always turn off the main source before extinguishing fire with water.

7. When Trapped in a Burning House or Building

- a. If fire in the house or building is highly suspected, immediately call the nearest Fire Station.
- b. Check if heat or smoke is coming from the cracks around the door to determine if there is fire on the other side. If none, use fingers to lightly touch the door knob.
- c. If the door knob is not hot and there is no smoke around the door, open the door carefully and slowly, and go towards the fire escape.
- d. If the door knob is hot or very warm, do not open the door.
- e. If a burst of heat or smoke pours into the room upon opening, quickly shut the door and make sure it is tightly closed.
- f. Keep heat and smoke from getting through the door by blocking the cracks around the door with sheets, blankets, and/or clothing.
- g. If there is a window in a room but without means to escape, open the window wide, stand in front of the window, and shout for help.
- h. Grab a piece of wet clothing or towel then place it over the mouth to prevent inhaling the smoke.
- i. Never hide under the bed or closet. Fire fighters will have a hard time finding you.
- j. Do not attempt to jump from the upper story windows.

8. When Evacuating

- a. Think of the nearest exit.
- b. Stay low to the ground as you make your way to the exit.
- c. Cover mouth with wet clothing or towel.
- d. Get out fast but calmly.

D. Earthquake Safety Tips

Here are some safety tips during earthquakes:

1. Remain calm to protect yourself and to help others. Look for a safe area where you can stay until after the shaking stops. Follow the emergency plan if one has been put into place by the employer.

2. Practice DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON.
 - a. DROP — DROP down to the floor.
 - b. COVER — Take COVER under a sturdy piece of furniture. Protect your head and neck.
 - c. HOLD ON — HOLD on to your protection and be prepared to move with it. HOLD the position until the ground stops shaking and it is safe to move.
3. If you are indoors, stay under a sturdy table or furniture to keep yourself safe from falling or moving objects. Do not run outside. Do not use the elevator.
4. If you are cooking, turn off the stove before moving to a safer area.
5. If you are outdoors, stay away from windows, hanging objects, utility and power lines, etc.
6. After the shaking stops, help check for injuries and damage to the house. Follow the instructions of persons in charge of emergency response in the community or building.

E. Typhoon and Flood Safety Tips

1. Pay close attention to typhoon and flood advisory from PAGASA, the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (RDRRMC) or local leaders on TV, radio, or the internet.
2. If evacuation is not advised, stay indoors at the height of the typhoon. Find an area inside the house away from windows and safe from flying debris.
3. If instruction for evacuation has been issued by the RDRRMC, the employer should make sure that all members of the household, including the *Kasambahay*, are prepared to move to safer grounds.
4. If the flood water is rising and has started to enter the house, turn off the main sources of electricity. Do not use electrical appliances at this time.
5. Wear personal protective equipment such as raincoat and boots if wading in flood is necessary to prevent water-borne diseases and to avoid injuries that may occur in case you accidentally step on debris or sharp objects.

F. Proper Scheduling of Task to Provide Rest for the *Kasambahay*

Laundry and ironing are both tedious tasks that require a significant amount of time when performed, hence the need to distribute them over the week. In order to maximize performance of these tasks and allow a *Kasambahay* the needed rest after doing the tasks, it is important to schedule and organize these tasks on specific days of the week.

1. Do the laundry in the morning to take advantage of the sunlight for quick drying of clothes. This can save on time, effort, and electricity. Dry clothes can be better prepared for storage and/or ironing.
2. Iron clothes in the morning or late afternoon when it is cooler and more comfortable. Ironing clothes exposes the *Kasambahay* to ergonomic hazards, burns, and heat radiation. It is important to perform the task on cooler periods of the day, whether in the morning or late afternoon, for better comfort of the *Kasambahay*. A stool or a chair can be used occasionally to ease prolonged standing.

G. Waste Management Tips: Handling and Disposal of Garbage

Garbage may contain materials that are dangerous to health. It is very important to protect oneself and properly handle all garbage materials. Proper waste management is also essential to protect the environment.

1. In handling all types of waste, wear the proper protection (mask, gloves, apron, and eye-shields when necessary).
2. Sort and segregate garbage properly
 - a. Follow designated methods of sorting and segregation of garbage. Use designated trash bins for specific waste. Ensure that wastes are disposed properly and based on schedule to prevent accumulation.
 - b. Accumulated wastes must be stored in designated areas. If there is a composting area, ensure that all biodegradable wastes are deposited in such area.
 - c. Sharp/abrasive items, chemical, chemical containers, and other hazardous wastes must be placed in designated bins, separate from common household garbage. Caution must be observed in handling these waste items. In case of skin contact or injury, emergency measures must be applied.
3. Handle and dispose food waste properly.
 - a. All biodegradable waste including food waste must be placed in the composting area, if one is available. Otherwise, these should be placed in containers for biodegradable wastes and should be kept away from flies, rats, cockroaches and food supplies to prevent contamination.

H. Ensuring Household Security Tips

All houses and buildings are vulnerable to theft and other security problems. It is very important to ensure that residences are protected from unwanted/dangerous persons.

1. Secure all doors, gates, locks, and windows. Do not leave doors and gates open. However, the occupants of the house including the *Kasambahay* must not be locked inside the house.
2. Look at peeping holes or windows for safety and security reasons before opening doors.

3. Do not allow visitors or strangers to enter the house unless advised by the employer. Strangers, bill collectors, and visitors should be entertained at the gate and should not be allowed access inside the house. If there is no gate, conversation should be done at the windows while ensuring that security is maintained and doors are locked.
4. Do not entertain prank calls. Do not give out information about the household members.
5. Do not leave keys where they can be accessed by strangers.
 - a. Always keep a duplicate set of keys in a secure area in case of emergency.
6. Be aware of the different ways to alert the barangay, neighbors, or police.
 - a. Use the alert system established by the barangay or homeowners' association.
 - b. Know the telephone or mobile numbers of key persons in the barangay and community.
 - c. In case of emergency or if assistance is needed, alert the security guards in the area. In cases when police notification is needed, the police hotline should be called.

I. Safety Tips in Conducting Errands: Use Safe Routes and Safe Hours

Running errands is a usual task of the *Kasambahay*. It is very important that he or she is not exposed to dangers in conducting the errands.

1. It is advisable that errands are done during daytime to ensure safety and security.
2. The *Kasambahay* should only use the safest route in carrying out errands. As much as possible, avoid walking in dark and secluded areas, streets with fast moving vehicles, corners where people drink or gamble, and other unsafe places.

J. Safety Orientation During Crisis (Theft and Robbery)

The *Kasambahay* should be oriented on dealing with crisis situations such as theft and robbery to avoid panic and to react appropriately.

1. As a precaution, the *Kasambahay* should refrain from giving vital information such as his/her name and details, names, and specific whereabouts of the owners and other household members, areas in the house where owners keep cash and valuables, and home and mobile numbers to peers, acquaintances, and others that they hardly know.
2. In case of emergency or crisis, the employer, security guards, and police should be informed immediately. It is important to mention facts of the incident (e.g. who, what, when, where and why). DO NOT leave location where the incident occurred. Wait for the owner, security guard or police to arrive.
3. Hotlines for Emergency

Display hotlines near the phone and call them immediately when necessary:

- a. Fire – (check with local Fire Department)
- b. Police – 117 or send TXT PNP to 2920
- c. Barangay – (check with barangay)
- d. Philippine Red Cross – 143 or (02) 911-1876
- e. Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) – (check with DOLE RO/PO/District Office)
- f. Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) – (check with DSWD RO/PO/District Office)
- g. Local Government Unit – (check with LGU)

K. Safety Considerations in Babysitting (*Yaya*) or Elderly Care (Caregiver)

A *Kasambahay* who takes care of babies and the elderly is exposed to a variety of potential hazards such as overexertion, germs from handling blood and wastes, and unhygienic conditions. The following are the safety and health tips to avoid injury or illness:

1. Use available devices such as walker, cane, or wheel chair to support and balance the elderly or sick household member with limited mobility.
2. In caring for babies, when appropriate, use the stroller to reduce lifting and carrying.
3. Observe standard precautions when handling human waste such as vomitus, urine, or feces/stools. Use proper PPE (mask, gloves, apron, and eye-shields) when necessary.
4. Dispose contaminated materials properly in covered garbage containers.
5. Always practice good hygiene. Proper hand washing with soap and water must be done before and after handling babies, the elderly or the sick, when handling food, and after handling human waste.

L. Tips in Handling of Pets

Many households have domestic animals or pets which are cared for by *Kasambahay*. These pets can be a source of injury or illness if the proper precautions are not followed.

1. Be aware of the hazards and injuries that pets can cause, e.g., bites and allergies.
2. Wear appropriate PPE when handling pets.
3. Observe proper hygiene when taking care of pets, e.g., wash hands thoroughly after feeding or handling their litter.
4. Whenever applicable, ensure that pets have been vaccinated against rabies.

M. Safety Tips in Gardening: Proper Use and Storage of Gardening Tools and Equipment

Many households have gardens which are tended by the *Kasambahay*. Gardening work may be a source of accident/injury and the chemicals used may cause an illness if used improperly.

1. Check tools and equipment regularly to ensure that they are safe and in good working condition.
2. Avoid long gardening sessions. Drink plenty of water after prolonged exposure to sunlight during gardening.
3. Always wear gardening gloves to protect hands from cuts, soil, insect bites, and skin irritants.
4. Use appropriate tools for digging (for example, a shovel or hand shovel).
5. Store gardening tools and equipment safely and securely.

N. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPEs are used to reduce exposure to occupational hazards. PPEs do not eliminate hazards but they may help minimize contact with specific hazardous agents while working. Examples of PPEs are dust masks, gloves, and apron.

1. Appropriate PPE must be used by the *Kasambahay*. Special consideration must be given to the proper selection of PPEs for protection against hazards and for prevention of injuries.
2. Ensure that the PPEs are properly maintained and cared for. Follow the instructions on maintenance and care.
3. Check PPEs for damage before and after use. Damaged items should be replaced.
4. Re-usable protective equipment should be cleaned thoroughly before using again.
5. Use dust mask to prevent inhalation of airborne particles.
6. For hand and arm protection:
 - a. Use latex gloves to protect the hands from contacting chemical or body secretions.
 - b. Gloves should fit snugly but should not restrict movement or affect the sensation.
 - c. Keep the nails short to avoid tearing or puncturing the gloves.
 - d. Wash hands thoroughly before and after use.
 - e. Check if there is any puncture before use.

7. For torso protection:

- a. Use body protection such as apron when necessary for protection from heat, hot objects or splashes, and chemicals.

O. Addressing Social issues of the *Kasambahay*

Long working hours, insufficient rest, and isolation from the family are some social difficulties of the *Kasambahay* which can affect their health.

1. Discuss with the employer to establish reasonable workload and working hours.
2. The *Kasambahay* shall be allowed to maintain his or her personal social circles.

IV. PUBLICATION/DISSEMINATION

This **OSH Tips** shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation and downloadable at www.dole.gov.ph and www.oshc.dole.gov.ph.

Be guided accordingly.

Manila, Philippines, May 9, 2014.


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Secretary

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