



The Secretary of State presents his compliments to their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and has the honor to refer to the Department's previous circular diplomatic notes that set forth the legal requirements and Department of State policy regarding the employment of foreign domestic workers by foreign mission members. The Department wishes to remind missions of mandatory Domestic Worker Program requirements. This note supersedes previous correspondence related to the subjects addressed in the note.

The Office of the Chief of Protocol emphasizes to foreign missions that domestic worker employers maintain an affirmative obligation to monitor any changes in the applicable minimum wage rates and ensure workers are compensated for every hour worked, including overtime as required under federal, state, and local law. Please note the Virginia state minimum wage increases to \$9.50/hour on May 1, 2021, and the Montgomery County, Maryland local minimum wage increases to \$13.50/hour on July 1, 2021.

Consistent with the mandatory contract terms, after the first 30 days of employment, all wages must be paid by electronic funds transfer or check every week or every two weeks to the domestic worker's U.S. bank account. Payments made monthly, every 15 days, or every 30 days are not permitted, as they often result in underpayment of hourly wages. We expect Missions to monitor compliance with payment requirements and ensure that employment contracts are updated accordingly.

The Department places a high priority on the fair and equitable treatment of domestic workers and looks to Chiefs of Mission to provide oversight of personnel who employ domestic workers to ensure all Domestic Worker Program requirements are followed. We expect Mission leadership to help ensure that any back wages owed to domestic workers are paid by mission employees.

The Department appreciates the diplomatic community's cooperation to protect foreign domestic workers and works to ensure that those employing these workers understand their contractual obligations and responsibilities. Questions may be directed to [DomesticWorkers@state.gov](mailto:DomesticWorkers@state.gov).

Department of State,

Washington, March 22, 2021.