

Safety Precautions on Cleaning Outward-Facing Windows

The Labour Department announced that starting from January 1, 2017, the Standard Employment Contract for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) will include a new clause on cleaning outward-facing windows to safeguard the occupational safety of FDHs. The new clause stipulates that, when an employer requires the helper to clean the outside of any window which is not located on the ground level or adjacent to a balcony (on which it must be reasonably safe for the helper to work) or common corridor, this must be performed under the following conditions:

- (i) the window being cleaned is fitted with a grille which is locked or secured in a manner that prevents the grille from being opened; and
- (ii) no part of the helper's body extends beyond the window ledge except the arms.

With reference to the above new arrangement, "Smart Living" recommends employers and "Smart Helpers" to observe the following safety precautions on cleaning outward-facing windows to safeguard the occupational safety of "Smart Helpers":

- Please ensure that the window being cleaned is fitted with a grille which is locked or secured in a manner that prevents the grille from being opened;
- No part of the helper's body extends beyond the window ledge except the arms; and
- In considering employment offers, "Smart Helpers" should note the risks to be involved if the window being cleaned is not fitted with a grille or the grille is unlocked or unsecured.