



News Release  
March 11, 2014

## **OFWs as models of good behavior**

Responding to recent reports about proposals to provide separate buses for OFWs in Singapore, POEA Administrator Hans Leo J. Cacdac said that, aside from being contributors to thriving economies all over the world, an overwhelming majority of overseas Filipino workers have been models of good behavior and have taken responsibility for their actions and decisions.

"OFWs for the most part have behaved responsibly and possess natural willingness to become citizens of the world, thereby shielding themselves from problems and requiring less government intervention while abroad," Cacdac said.

The Administrator said that responsible OFWs have the skills and training needed for the job. They have the power to negotiate for higher salaries and benefits and they sign an employment contract only when they are satisfied with its provisions. They leave the country using legal travel documents and proper work permits.

Cacdac said OFWs generally stay out of trouble and are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities while working abroad.

"While living and working in another country as ambassadors of goodwill, OFWs conduct themselves appropriately -- respecting laws, customs and traditions," he added.

What would be the POEA's advice to current and future OFWs? Administrator Cacdac counts the ways:

"1. Be constructively assertive. Prove your worth and merit to your employer, while being vigilant about entitlements provided in your employment contract.

"2. Do not engage in illegal and criminal activities.

"3. Communicate with your family regularly. Provide them moral and financial

support. Never forget your status as the moral and spiritual compass of your children.

“4. Respect the rights of your co-workers. Help other OFWs in need.

“5. Honor your employment contract. Fulfill your duties and responsibilities provided therein. Do not leave your employer without any justifiable reason. Do not abandon your work capriciously. Remember that any challenge or conflict at work can be hurdled with a positive mindset and an openness to peaceful and humble resolution.

"POEA Rules and Regulations list the following as legitimate reasons for an OFW to leave the employer: a) Exposure to hazardous, demeaning working and living conditions; b) Refusal of the employer or principal to grant, release or remit wages and other benefits due the worker; c) War, plague or other calamities at the worksite; and d) Violation of labor laws of the Philippines, the host country or international labor laws."

Cacdac clarified that, just like foreign employers and licensed recruitment agencies, erring OFWs are also subject to disciplinary action. The POEA has exclusive jurisdiction to hear and decide such cases filed against them.

Cacdac said the POEA docketed 1,116 disciplinary action cases against Filipino workers in 2012 and 1,192 cases in 2013.

Cacdac cited the offenses committed by an OFW that are ground for disciplinary action as follows: 1) Using, providing, or submitting false information or documents for purposes of job application or employment; 2) Unjustified refusal to depart for the worksite after all employment and travel documents have been duly approved by the appropriate government agency/ies; 3) Commission of a felony or crime punishable by Philippine Laws or by the laws of the host country; 4) Unjustified breach of employment contract; 5. Embezzlement of company funds or monies and/or properties of a fellow worker entrusted for delivery to kin or relatives in the Philippines; and 6) Violation of the sacred practices of the host country.

An OFW with a pending complaint for disciplinary action or those who are subject of a warrant of arrest or hold departure order shall be disqualified from overseas employment unless temporarily cleared.

An OFW may also be preventively suspended when the evidence of guilt is strong and the charge involves a serious offense. /END