



Republic of the Philippines  
**Department of Migrant Workers**  
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**DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. 02**  
**Series of 2023**

**RENAMING OF OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATE TO OFW PASS AND  
LIFTING OF FEES ON OFW PASS TO REHIRES OR BALIK-MANGGAGAWA OFWs**

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 11032, otherwise known as "The Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018", Republic Act No. 8042, as amended by Republic Act No. 10022, otherwise known as "The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act Of 1995", and President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s directive to simplify the processing and documentation of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and to pursue automated services to ensure immediate delivery of assistance to them, this Circular is hereby issued with following objectives:

1. To rename Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC) as OFW Clearance *also known as* OFW Pass, pursuant to the 2023 DMW Rules and Regulations Governing the Recruitment and Employment of Landbased Overseas Filipino Workers;
2. To advise the public that the Department has lifted the Php100.00 processing fee for OFW Clearance or OFW Pass being issued for Rehires or Balik-Manggagawa OFWs; and
3. To provide advance information to the public on the forthcoming creation and implementation of DMW mobile application.

**I. Definition of Terms**

For purposes of implementing this issuance and with reference to the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Department of Migrant Workers Act and the 2023 DMW Rules and Regulations Governing the Recruitment and Employment of Overseas Filipino Workers, the terms used herein are defined as follows:

1. Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) – refers to a Filipino who is to be engaged, is engaged, or has been engaged in remunerated activity in a country of which he or she is not an immigrant, citizen, or permanent resident or is not awaiting naturalization, recognition, or admission, whether land-based or sea-based regardless of status; excluding a Filipino engaged under a

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By DMW General Services Division on: July 11, 2023





government-recognized exchange visitor program for cultural and educational purposes. For purposes of this provision, a person engaged in remunerated activity covers a person who has been contracted for overseas employment but has yet to leave the Philippines, regardless of status, and includes "Overseas Contract Workers." The term "OFW" is synonymous to "Migrant Worker."

2. Overseas Employment Certificate – refers to a document issued to an OFW by the Department attesting to the regularity of his/her recruitment, documentation and registration as an OFW, which makes him/her eligible for overseas employment subject to Philippine immigration laws and enables him/her to avail of the privileges granted to OFWs.

The term Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC) is used interchangeably with OFW Clearance, and subsequently as the digital OFW Pass.

3. Rehires – refers to the land-based workers who renewed their employment contracts with the same principal. The term "rehires" is synonymous to *Balik-Manggagawa* and returning worker, and refers to an Overseas Filipino Worker who has served or is serving his/her employment contract and is either: (a) returning to the same employer and the same job site; or (b) returning to the same employer in a new job site. It shall likewise include an Overseas Filipino Worker who has started his or her employment on-site with a new employer and is returning to the said employer.

## II. Coverage and Implementation

All rehired workers or Balik-Manggagawa OFWs, including those who were able to secure OEC through the OEC Exemption Facility as provided under Memorandum Circular No. 24, Series of 2021 (Consolidated Guidelines on the Processing and Issuance of OECs for Returning Workers/Balik-Manggagawa) are covered by this issuance. Subsequently, all rehired workers or Balik-Maggagawa OFWs who are issued an OFW Pass shall also be covered. Upon effectivity, OECs and OFW Passes shall be issued free of charge.

While the foregoing applies only to rehired workers or Balik-Manggagawa OFWs, the Department will be extending similar benefits/privileges to agency-hire and direct-hire workers, subject to issuance of a separate Department Circular.

## III. Transition Period

Within sixty (60) days from effectivity of this Circular, OECs issued prior to the launch of the OFW Pass shall continue to be honored and recognized as proof of overseas employment and as exemption of OFW from travel tax and airport terminal fees. Likewise, within the abovementioned transition period, OECs via walk-in through the Balik-Manggagawa Center shall still be allowed.

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Thenceforth, all OFWs are required to have an OFW Pass when departing for or returning to their work overseas.

#### IV. Effectivity

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days from publication in a newspaper of general circulation and from filing with the UP Law Center.

For the information and guidance of all concerned.

  
MARIA SUSANA V. OPLE  
Secretary

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