

Labour mobility in Qatar

Key information for employers



All workers in the State of Qatar can change jobs without having to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) anytime during their contract period. While the removal of the NOC covers all workers, the rules to end an employment contract and change jobs differ for different categories of workers.

These changes mark a major milestone in Qatar's labour reform agenda and transition towards a knowledge-based economy as set out in Vision 2030.

What do these changes mean in practice?

All workers in Qatar, whether on fixed-term contracts or opened ended contracts, no longer need to obtain from their current employer a prior approval to change jobs. This means that as an employer, you can now more easily recruit workers locally, with the skills and local experience needed for the job.

How will these legislative changes benefit me as an employer?

The new laws will lead to:

- ◆ Better job matching where employers can recruit workers with the right skills to carry out the tasks and with previous experience in Qatar
- ◆ Decrease in recruitment and repatriation costs through local recruitment
- ◆ Level playing field among employers

FOR PRIVATE SECTOR WORKERS COVERED BY THE LABOUR LAW NO. 14 OF 2004

What procedures does a worker have to follow if he/she wants to change employer?

A worker wishing to change employer must submit his/her application to change jobs through the [Ministry of Labour's \(MoL\) electronic system](#). Once MoL has processed the application, an SMS will be sent to the worker, the current and new employers confirming the change of job and indicating the notice period. The worker must work until the end of her/ his notice period:

- ◆ If the worker has worked with the employer for two years or less, the notice period is one month.
- ◆ If the worker has worked with the employer for more than two years, the notice period is two months.

What happens if a worker does not honour the notice period?

If a worker terminates his/her contract without observing the notice period, he/she must pay the employer a compensation equivalent to his/her basic wage for the notice period or the remaining part of the notice period.

This is calculated as an amount equivalent to the basic wage for the remaining part of the notice period. For example: If the worker's basic wage is QAR 1,500 per month and the worker stops working two weeks before the end of a one-month notice period he/she will have to pay to his/her employer QAR 750 to terminate the contract legally.

Can a worker change jobs during the probation period?

It may be stipulated in the employment contract that the worker shall be subject to a probation period agreed upon by both parties, provided that the probation period does not exceed six months from the date of commencement of the work. The worker shall not be subject to more than one probation period with the same employer.

A worker may terminate the employment contract within the probation period, provided he/she complies with the following:

- ◆ He/she must notify the current employer at least one month before he/she plans to leave the job, through MoL's electronic system. The worker's new employer must compensate the current employer a portion of the recruitment fees and one-way air ticket at the level that was agreed to by the current and new employers, not exceeding two months of the current basic wage. The compensation amount should be discussed between the new and old employer; and
- ◆ Upon MoL's approval to change jobs, the worker must continue to work with the current employer until the end of the notice period, as indicated by the Ministry, unless otherwise agreed with the current employer.

During the probation period, what are the procedures that workers have to follow to terminate their employment contract and leave Qatar?

If the worker leaves Qatar without giving a notification or completing the notice period, the worker will not be able to return to work in Qatar for one year. In order to avoid this situation, the worker needs to follow the procedures below:

- ◆ The worker should notify the employer, through [MoL's electronic system](#).
- ◆ The notice period should be agreed upon with the worker but cannot be more than two months.

After the probation period, what are the procedures that workers have to follow to terminate their employment contract and leave Qatar?

If the worker leaves Qatar without giving a notification or completing the notice period, the worker will not be able to return to work in Qatar for one year. In order to avoid this situation, the worker needs to follow the below procedures:

- ◆ The worker should notify the employer, through [MoL's electronic system](#).
- ◆ The worker should work during the notice period - which cannot be more than:
 - ◇ One month, if the worker has worked for two years or less.
 - ◇ Two months, if the worker has worked for more than two years.

If a worker leaves the company, does the employer still have to pay the end of service gratuity or other benefits?

If the worker completed at least one year of employment and the contract was not terminated for committing any of the violations described in [Article 61 of the Labour Law](#), the employer must still pay the worker his/her end of service benefits, accrued annual leave not taken and any other benefits stipulated by Labour Law No. 14 of 2004 and the signed employment contract.

Remember that the employer must also continue to provide food and accommodation (or the relevant allowances) until the termination date.

What procedures do I have to follow as an employer to terminate the employment contract of a worker?

After the probation period, an employer wishing to terminate the employment contract of a worker must notify the worker that he/she plans to terminate the employment contract, through [MoL's electronic system](#).

- ◆ If the worker has worked with the employer for two years or less, the notice period is 1 month.
- ◆ If the worker has worked with the employer for more than two years, the notice period is 2 months.

The employer should continue to pay the wage and other benefits to the worker during the notice period, as per the employment contract.

Can an employer terminate the employment contract of a worker immediately without observing the notice period?

If the employer terminates the contract without observing the notice period, he/she must pay the worker a compensation equivalent to the worker's basic wage for the notice period or the remaining duration of the notice period.

This is calculated as an amount equivalent to the basic wage for the remaining part of the notice period. For example: If the worker's basic wage is QAR 1,500 per month and the employer asks the worker to stop working two weeks before the end of a one-month notice period, the employer will have to pay to the worker QAR 750 to terminate the contract legally.

Can an employer terminate the employment contract of a worker during the probation period?

An employer may terminate the employment contract of a worker during the probation period if the employer finds out that the worker is unfit to carry out his/her duties. The employer must notify the worker at least 1 month before the termination, through [MoL's electronic system](#).

Upon termination of the employment contract, if the worker is going back to his/her country, the employer must cover the expenses of the return plane ticket.

During the probation period, can an employer terminate the employment contract of a worker without observing the notice period?

If the employer asks the worker to stop working before the end of the notice period, the employer shall pay the worker for every day of the notice period the employer asked the worker not to work.

This is calculated as an amount equivalent to the basic wage for the remaining part of the notice period. For example: If the worker's basic wage is QAR 1,500 per month and the employer asks the worker to stop working two weeks before the end of a one-month notice period the employer will have to pay to the worker QAR 750 to terminate the contract legally.

Does an employer have to pay for the return flight ticket of the worker upon termination?

The employer must complete the worker's repatriation procedures, including bearing the cost of a return air ticket, to his/her country of residence within a maximum of two weeks from contract expiration. If the worker joins another employer before leaving the country, the repatriation obligation shall be incumbent upon the new employer.

In cases where the worker terminates the employment contract prior to its end and plans to leave Qatar while respecting the notice period (outside of the scope of amended Article 51 of the Labour Law), the employer shall cover part of the cost of the return air ticket proportional to the actual employment duration the worker completed out of the full term of the employment contract.

What procedures does a new employer have to follow to recruit a worker locally?

1. Once the worker agrees to the terms and conditions of the job offer provided by the new employer, the worker has to submit his/her application to change jobs through the [Ministry of Labour's electronic system](#). The new employer will have to sign and put the official stamp of the company to the application form before the workers submits it online.
 2. The new employer will receive a confirmation SMS from MoL once the change of employer (requested by the worker) is approved. The end of the worker's notice period with the current employer will also be indicated in the SMS.
 3. The new employer is then responsible for filling the information of the employment contract through MoL's [Digital Authentication System for a Multi-lingual Employment Contract](#). This must be completed within three months from the end of the worker's notice period. After filling the information, the employer should print the employment contract to be signed by himself/ herself and the worker. The signed employment contract should then be uploaded onto the digital platform, along with the other required documents. The employer must pay the fees for contract authentication and print a copy of the authenticated employment contract to give to the worker. A copy of the authenticated contract will be sent automatically to the Ministry of Interior for ID issuance purposes.
 4. The employer should then log into the Ministry of Interior's Metrash services webpage to request a new Qatari ID card (QID) for the worker.
 5. Once the procedure is completed, the employer should provide the new QID to the worker.
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Who pays for the administrative procedure required to change employer?

MoL's administrative procedure required to change the employer is free of charge for workers and employers.

FOR WORKERS COVERED BY SPECIAL LAWS

What are the rules to termination of employment for domestic workers?

The rules for terminating and changing jobs for domestic workers are the same as for workers covered by the Labour Law No. 14 of 2004. An updated standard employment contract for domestic workers reflecting these rules has been adopted. However, remember that the probation period for domestic workers cannot exceed 3 months, and that a domestic worker can only have one probation period with the same employer.

In addition, domestic workers may unilaterally terminate their employment contract anytime during the contract period without notice and keep their right to an end of service gratuity, pro rata annual leave dues and a return plane ticket back to his/her country of origin in cases specified by [Article 17 of Law No. 15 of 2017 on Domestic Workers](#).

Employers of domestic workers may terminate the employment contract without notice and without granting end of service gratuity for the year of dismissal, if the domestic worker does not abide by the obligation stipulated in the employment contract or those described in [Articles 16 and 11 of Law No. 15 of 2017 on Domestic Workers](#).

What are the rules to terminate and change jobs for agricultural and grazing workers, and fishermen?

The rules for terminating and changing jobs for agricultural and grazing workers, as well as fishermen, are exactly the same as for private sector worker covered by the Labour Law No. 14 of 2004.

If you need more details, check the Council of Ministers Resolution No. 17 of 2012 on the application of some provisions of the Labour Law No. 14 of 2004 to workers in agriculture and grazing.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

For more information, please contact the Ministry of Labour's Labour Relations Department by email (info@mol.gov.qa) or visit our offices.
