

# 臺灣勞工



## 簡訊

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## Ministry of Labor Subsidizes Assistive Devices Supporting the Work or Daily Life of Workers Affected by Occupational Accidents

When a worker suffers an occupational accident and is later diagnosed by a physician as needing assistive devices, such as a wheelchair, a spinal brace, mobility aids, or a pressure garment, they can apply for subsidy in accordance with the Labor Occupational Accident Insurance and Protection Act (hereinafter referred to as the Occupational Accident Insurance Act). Eligibility criteria, subsidized items, and subsidy rates are all clearly stipulated. Workers need only fill out the application form and submit required documents, such as a medical certificate and the original uniform invoice or receipt, making the procedure simple and convenient. This subsidy goes beyond occupational accident insurance, alleviating the financial burden of affected workers and facilitate their recovery, enabling them to return to work as soon as possible.

According to the Ministry of Labor (MOL), the number of assistive devices eligible for subsidy under the Occupational Accident Insurance Act has increased from 105 under the Act for Protecting Worker of Occupational Accidents to 116, including subsidies for dentures. Additionally, the subsidy amounts for 20 commonly applied assistive devices have been raised. For example, the subsidy for a spinal brace increased from NT\$8,000 to NT\$10,000, a knee brace from NT\$3,000 to NT\$6,000, and a special-grade wheelchair from NT\$15,000 to NT\$25,000. Moreover, there is now a provision allowing for subsidy applications on unlisted items, reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The annual subsidy cap per person has also increased from NT\$60,000 to NT\$100,000. Statistics show that since the Occupational Accident Insurance Act came into effect until September 2024, 369 (35% of 1,056 workers) workers have benefited from the updated legislation and have, received higher subsidy amounts.

The MOL added that the new provision considers workers' physical recovery progress following occupational accidents as well as their needs for different assistive devices and the varying financial burden at each stage. To ensure efficient use of assistive technology resources, workers can apply for subsidies by submitting invoices or receipts for both listed items and non-listed items, regardless of whether devices are purchased or rented. This approach helps reduce the high one-time costs workers may encounter. When workers recover, they can simply return the devices, making them available for others in need.

For information on application procedures and required documents for the device subsidy, please visit the official website of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or contact the Occupational Accident Labor Protection Division, where designated personnel will assist you (Tel: 02-8995-6666 Ext. 8287).



## Ministry of Labor Incentivizes Unions to Conclude Collective Bargaining Agreements, Recognizing Efforts to Improve Members' Labor Welfare

The execution of collective bargaining agreements between labor unions and industry can stabilize labor relations and ensure the mutual rights and interests of both labor and management. To encourage labor unions to conclude collective bargaining agreements, in 2016, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) formulated the Implementation Directions of Labour Incentives for Unions That Signed a Collective Agreement, providing incentive payments to labor unions up to NT\$250,000 based on the agreement's content. From 2016 to August 2024, 531 applications from labor unions have been approved, with more than NT\$84.76 million in incentives paid, demonstrating the MOL's recognition of labor unions' contributions and efforts to conclude collective bargaining agreements.

The MOL noted that maintaining effective collective bargaining agreements and ensuring their integrity requires labor unions to consistently negotiate with employers, a process that cannot be done hastily. Since collective bargaining agreements significantly impact members' rights and interests, the MOL carefully reviews and approves incentive payments to labor unions that conclude such agreements, determining the incentive amounts on a case-by-case basis based upon level of protection for members' rights and interests, improvements in labor conditions, the integrity of agreements, and the number of potential beneficiaries.

The MOL added that collective bargaining agreements between labor and management have become increasingly comprehensive with regard to content. These agreements not only demonstrate harmonious labor relations with a high degree of autonomy between labor and management but also highlight the efforts made by both parties to facilitate employee rights and interests. In addition, to help both parties refine collective bargaining agreements, the MOL compiled the Notes and Reference Cases for Drafting Collective Bargaining Agreements in July this year and made the updated version available on its official website. The MOL also offers the Collective Bargaining Agreement On-Site Guidance and Assistance Program for stalled negotiations, offering professional consulting services through labor relations or legal experts. These services are customized to individual cases to facilitate smoother negotiations. When needed, these services can be accessed through the China Productivity Center, an agency commissioned by the MOL.



## Employers Reminded to Comply with Annual Paid Leave Regulations as Year-End Approaches

As the work year comes to an end, any unused annual paid leave accumulated at year's end shall be settled by the employer and paid to the worker as part of their wages. This payment shall be made irrespective of why the leave remains unused, unless the employer and worker have agreed to carry over unused leave to the following year.

According to Article 38 of the Labor Standards Act, a worker who has been continually employed for a certain period of time shall be granted annual paid leave by their employer. The worker and employer may negotiate and determine whether to use the calendar year (January 1 to December 31), the fiscal year, the academic year (for schools), or any other period mutually agreed upon as the "year" for calculating annual paid leave. However, regardless of which annual period is chosen, employers shall pay wages for any unused annual paid leave at the end of the agreed period. The deadline for wage payment must be either on the wage payment date agreed upon in the contract or, at the latest, 30 days following the end of the annual period.

Annual paid leave is a legal right of workers, and the dates for taking annual paid leave shall be according to worker input. To keep workers informed of the number of annual paid leave days available each year, employers shall record the number of annual paid leave days available and the total amount of wages paid for unused leave days in the payroll, notifying workers in writing. Such written notifications may be made in paper or electronic format.

If an employer violates relevant regulations, workers may appeal to their local labor administrative authority (the labor bureau/administration or the social welfare department/administration of their local special municipality or county/city government) or call the 1955 hotline provided by the Ministry of Labor (MOL) to protect their rights and interests.



## Minister of Labor Ho, Pei-Shan (the then) Receives U.S. Union Leaders Delegation

Minister of Labor Ho, Pei-Shan (the then) received a delegation of six American union leaders on the morning of September 23, 2024. The visiting delegation included representatives from the Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), National Education Association (NEA), Washington, D.C. Chapter of the Labor and Employment Relations Association (DC LERA), and American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 12.

Since 2013, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) of Taiwan has invited American union leaders to visit Taiwan every two years to strengthen exchange and interaction between the labor unions in Taiwan and the U.S. This visit marks the largest labor exchange delegation since the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

During the guests' stay, the MOL hosted a Taiwan-U.S. Union Leaders Symposium and invited participation by key unions from Taiwan. The symposium focused on sharing experiences regarding current labor issues and trends, including the Response Strategies for Labor Union Development in the Digital Era. Additionally, visits to relevant labor unions were arranged to support the development of collective labor relations in Taiwan, furthering Taiwan-U.S. partnership in labor affairs.



Group photo of Minister Ho, Pei-Shan (the then) and the visiting American union leaders' delegation

## Award Ceremony of the 2024 Work-Life Balance Awards: Embracing A New Workplace Culture as a Formula for Happiness

On October 30, 2024, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) held the 2024 Work-Life Balance Awards ceremony at the Sheraton Grand Taipei Hotel. Deputy Minister of Labor Hsu, Chuan-Sheng (the then), attended the ceremony to honor corporations for their contributions to work-life balance with the hope of inspiring more businesses to exchange ideas to promote of work-life balance.

The 2024 Work-Life Balance Awards focus on implementing flexible work arrangements, childcare support measures, and employee health care mechanisms. A total of 35 corporations were awarded this year, with 13 winning the Flexible Working Award, 8 the Family-Friendly Award, and 14 the Employee Care Award.

This year's awards-winning corporations have implemented various employee-friendly measures tailored to employees at different stages of their careers. For example, Synopsys Taiwan Co., Ltd. promotes flexible work hours and locations, allowing employees who need to care for family members or address health concerns to apply for remote work. Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, Linkou established childcare centers, kindergartens, and after-school care facilities. It also provides resources for the elderly, offering comprehensive support for employees' family members of all ages. Cathay Financial Holdings improved employee physical and mental well-being by utilizing digital information technology and health management apps to deliver online health courses, staying current with the times through an innovative approach encouraging employees to develop self-initiated health management habits. E.SUN Financial Holding Co., Ltd. created the E.SUN Baby Development Fund, providing a NT\$100,000 child growth fund for each child born to employees. It also established communication channels to listen to employees' needs and suggestions.

Corporations that create friendly workplaces and support their employees' passion and creativity at work will, in turn, achieve steady, sustainable growth and foster innovation. The MOL will continue to encourage corporations to promote work-life balance, collaborating with them to create happy workplaces. For more information on the 2024 Work-Life Balance Awards winners and their creative measures, please visit the MOL's Work-Life Balance website.



Group photo of Deputy Minister Hsu, Chuan-Sheng (the then) and the Employee Care Award winners

## 1st Taiwan-India Labor Cooperation Working-Level Meeting Successfully Concludes with Plans to Bring in First Group of 1,000 Indian Manufacturing Workers

The 1st Taiwan-India Labor Cooperation Working-Level Meeting concluded successfully on November 5. The event was co-chaired by Workforce Development Agency Director-General Tsai, Meng-Liang (the then) under the Ministry of Labor (MOL) and Secretary Surinder Bhagat of India's Overseas Employment & Protector General of Emigrants (OE & PGE) Division. The Indian delegation also included officials from the OE & PGE Division and India Taipei Association (ITA) Director-General Manharsinh Laxmanbhai Yadav. Representatives from Taiwan included officials from the MOL, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India. The two sides discussed several issues, including future Taiwan-India working-level meetings, the framework and content of the launch program, procedures for bringing in Indian workers, as well as direct hiring contacts. The three main conclusions reached during the bilateral discussion were:

- I. Taiwan and India agree that working-level meetings will be jointly chaired by secretary or director-general-level officials from both sides. In principle, working-level meetings will primarily be conducted online, and in accordance with an Indian proposed, held every two months, with additional ad hoc meetings scheduled as necessary.
- II. Taiwan and India will jointly promote the "Launch program to Bring Indian Workers to Taiwan" with no predetermined period of duration. The program is open to updates and revisions on a rolling basis in line with discussions conducted at bilateral working-level meetings. Both parties agree to a small-scale approach to bring in workers, initially starting with 1,000 Indian manufacturing workers, with a target that 5% are directly hired. A rolling review of implementation results will also be conducted. A positive evaluation may allow program expansion into include more industries and include more workers at an appropriate time.
- III. Taiwan and India agreed to each designate a dedicated direct hiring unit. Taiwan chose the Workforce Development Agency, with the Direct Hiring Service Center as the executing agency. India selected the OE & PGE Division as its responsible agency, operating through the eMigrate 2.0 portal. Taiwan will submit a list of questions to the ITA for further clarification as to how the portal operates.

The MOL will continue to plan and promote matters related to this bilateral consensus. Once preparatory work by relevant government agencies in Taiwan and India is complete, a small number of Indian workers will be brought in. Based on the results of this initial phase, the program may be gradually expanded to include more industries and more workers.



Director General Tsai, Meng-Liang (the then) of the Workforce Development Agency, MOL, OE & PGE Division Secretary Surinder Bhagat, and other representatives from Taiwan and India

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