



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

YOUR BANTU SERVANT AND YOU

A FEW SUGGESTIONS TO FACILITATE HAPPIER RELATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE

This leaflet has been prepared by the Non-European Affairs Department in the hope that it will assist European employers in their day to day dealings with their Bantu servants. One of the most popular fallacies prevailing among South Africans is that "I know the Bantu and how to treat him". Our experience in the Department is the direct opposite to this and it is only the exceptional European employer who is found on examination to qualify in terms of this claim. For this reason it is earnestly hoped that this little booklet will prove of some value to the public.

Much of the tension which exists between the different racial groups in the country can be eased by you playing your part in giving serious attention to the human relationship factor in the handling of your Bantu domestic servant.

Generally it can be said that where there is courtesy and mutual respect between people of different groups, this permeates into the groups as a whole. As an employer of Bantu, you can therefore help tremendously in establishing a harmonious relationship between the European and the Bantu of this country. Good Black/White relations very often have their foundation in the home, and the Golden Rule "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" could result in mutual goodwill and respect. If all members of your household treat a servant with recognition of his dignity as a human being, he will respond and reciprocate.

Women should be exceptionally careful in the treatment of male servants. In tribal life a woman is always regarded as a minor and remains under the tutelage of a man. She must always act with due respect and modesty towards and in front of males. A women employer can enhance her reputation with her male servant by observing the following basic rules of behaviour in her dealings with him:-

- (i) Always behave towards him with the same dignity and modesty that you would behave towards a male of your own race. Above all, never appear in front of him in any state of undress, or allow any female in the family to so appear.

:- Do not leave ...

- (ii) Do not leave girls in his care. It never happens in tribal society.
- (iii) Do not expect him to make your bed, wash or iron your under-clothing or those of girls, nor to wash stained linen. It outrages his sense of what is proper.
- (iv) Never give vent to annoyance in an undignified way and never allow children to speak to him in any other but dignified and courteous terms. Respect always breeds respect.
- (v) Every person has a name dear to him, because in his own mind he identifies himself with his name. Therefore, never address your servant in any other way or by any other name but the one originally given to you as his name. "Boys", "Jim" (or "Mary" to females) as a form of address gives much more offence than is generally realised.

Although many Bantu have been born and educated in European areas and could, therefore, with some justification, be regarded as westernised to a degree, the majority of male domestic servants are still tribalised to a greater or lesser extent with limited knowledge or understanding of the European way of life. Many of them have also a very limited understanding of any other language but their own. To obviate any misunderstanding and possible annoyance, it is desirable that you:-

- (a) Use a language he understands reasonably well when giving instructions. You will create good will towards yourself and your family if you are able to speak his language, failing which a related Bantu language, or in the last resort some form of lingua franca such as "fanagalo". Inexpensive booklets on "fanagalo" are available at all booksellers.
- (b) Give instructions clearly and concisely. Be positive. Say "Do this", not "Don't do that".
- (c) Make sure that he understands what is required of him. He thinks it polite to say "Yes" even if he did not understand what you said.

:- (d) Give orders ...

- (d) Give orders one at a time. Very few servants are able to follow, remember and carry out a series of instructions in the correct order, or at all, for that matter.
- (e) Try to organise the work into a proper routine and interrupt the routine as little as possible. Do not call him from routine work to do another task.
- (f) Show him everything that he has to do within the shortest possible period after employment. Gradual introduction of new tasks, is seen as an innovation of duties he was not originally employed to perform.

FOOD.

Originally in tribal society the Bantu's staple diet consisted of porridge, supplemented by milk, meat and edible berries and wild fruit from the veld, which, if available in reasonable quantities, supplemented the deficiency in the staple diet.

Feeding habits in the towns have changed and starchy foods in the form of porridge and/or bread alone is not enough and although it may form the basis of your servant's diet, it should be supplemented by protein foods such as meat, butter or margarine, milk, cheese, eggs, dried beans and vegetables. Difficulty may be experienced in persuading servants to eat the latter, but they should be encouraged to do so. Some sugar and jam should always form part of the lighter meals as well as tea or coffee with the necessary sugar and milk.

Where only one or two domestic servants are employed, food from the table may be sufficient to supplement the traditional staple diet, but where more are employed, special provision should be made. Cooking facilities, including utensils, should in this case be provided.

Meals should be taken in the servant's quarters and sufficient time for that should be allowed. Bantu are used to taking their time about their meals.

LIQUOR.

Kaffir beer, their traditional national drink plays a very important part in the religious and social life of the Bantu and it is imperative that he should be placed in a position where he can obtain this most important beverage in a legal way.

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Time off to enable him to visit one of the City Council's beerhalls for this unadulterated wholesome drink is essential.

Regulations governing the supply of European liquor to Bantu will be issued soon and it will be to both your own and your servant's advantage if you make yourself conversant with these.

ACCOMMODATION.

Your servant's quarters are subject to inspection by inspectors of the Non-European Affairs Department of the City Council and should conform to certain standards as to space, etc. It is, however, your responsibility to see that they are kept hygienic. An iron bedstead and mattress with storage space for clothing and odds and ends should be the minimum furnishings and inspections at irregular intervals to see that the quarters are clean together with regular fumigation or spraying with DDT or similar insecticides should be resorted to.

Separate bathing facilities - a bathroom or shower cubicle if at all possible - a decent sized galvanised bath being the minimum, plus soap and other disinfectants should be supplied.

WAGES.

This is a matter causing considerable heart searching in the country at present. Wages are still very much a personal matter between employer and employee and varies from one area to another in the city. However, employers should keep the following in mind when fixing the wages of their domestic and other servants:-

The general principle that you get only what you have paid for obtains in this field as well as in any other, so that if you want good service, pay good wages and you will be sure of attracting decent, honest and reliable servants.

The prevailing rates for domestic servants who "live in" on their employer's premises and who are provided with food, accommodation and clothing in the way of overalls, aprons, kitchen suits, etc., are between R14 and R16 per month at the moment. Servants who are employed as full-time cooks generally earn between R16 and R24 per month. Gardeners, if employed on a casual basis, receive R1.25 to R1.50 per day plus food and some allowance for transport costs. Female employees such as charwomen, laundry maids, seamstresses, etc., are currently being paid between R1.25 and R2 per day plus transport. Chaffeurs earn on an average R20 to R28 per month.

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In the case of domestic servants living in the Municipal townships, it must be remembered that these persons have families depending on them and this must be taken into account when fixing wages. Also contrary to popular belief most male servants do still have families at home in the tribal areas who are wholly dependent on the money sent home, so that it is incorrect to assume that such a person is only responsible for his own support. As a matter of general interest this Department has established by careful surveys in the Bantu townships that the minimum wage on which a family of five can exist is R48 per month. Regrettably very few families earn this amount, even where both parents are working.

HOURS OF DUTY.

This is also a matter for individual adjustment. It must be remembered that domestic servants are human with social, recreational and other interests and provision should be made for time off to enable them to follow these pursuits. As a general rule duty hours should not exceed 10 hours per day with suitable breaks in between. In addition, domestic servants should be allowed a free day from about 12 noon onwards once a week as well as a free Sunday afternoon on alternate weeks.

LEAVE.

It is customary to allow domestic servants a minimum of two weeks' leave on full pay every year.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS.

There are a number of involved legal requirements to which you and your servant are subject, and it is your duty to make yourself conversant with these and to acquaint your servant with them and explain them to him. Neglect on your part may cause much heart burning and inconvenience to you and arrests, fines and perhaps even imprisonment to your servant. The requirements are briefly:-

- (i) It is an offence to employ any Bantu, whether male or female, who has either no endorsement at all in Section "A" of his or her reference book or any of the following endorsements:-
 - (a) An endorsement stating that the bearer is permitted to take up employment with a specific employer whose name is mentioned. Permission of that kind is not transferable.
 - (b) An endorsement stating that the bearer is required to report to the Local Labour Bureau before a certain date which has already expired. In such cases, the prospective employer should first ascertain from

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the labour bureau whether bearer would still be eligible for employment in the area. This can be done by referring the Bantu concerned to the bureau with a letter offering him employment.

- (c) An endorsement stating that the Native is registered as a workseeker with the District Labour Bureau, Johannesburg. This Bureau is concerned only with the supply of Native labour outside the urban area (Municipal area), but within the district of Johannesburg. A Bantu registered as a workseeker with this Bureau is not in possession of any authority to take up employment in the urban area of Johannesburg, and will normally also be in possession of a green card which states that bearer is authorised to take up employment in the non-prescribed area of Johannesburg.
 - (d) An endorsement stating that bearer must report to an office, other than the Local Labour Bureau, within a stipulated time.
- (ii) Register all vacancies (for males and females) with your Local Labour Bureau:- Males at 80 Albert Street, P.O. Box 5382, Johannesburg, Tel. 23-7381;
Females at 1, Polly Street., P.O. Box 5382, Johannesburg, Tel. 22-4126.

Employers requiring temporary or casual daily paid labour can also apply to the Local Labour Bureau who will endeavour to send suitable applicants.

- (iii) In response to an application for labour a suitable workseeker for the vacancy will be sent to the prospective employer for interview. The workseeker will be in possession of Form R.129 addressed to the employer concerned, as well as Notification of Engagement ("E") and Notification of Discharge ("F") Cards.

The employer is required to endorse the R.129 form in the space provided to the effect that he is either desirous or not desirous of employing the workseeker. If he decides to employ bearer he is also required to complete the "E" Card in full. He must then hand the completed R.129 form and the completed "E" Card to the Bantu and instruct him or her to report to the Department at 80 Albert Street, in the case of males, and at 1, Polly Street in the case of females.

The necessary authority for the workseeker concerned to take up employment with the specific employer will be stamped in his or her reference book and the registration of a service contract in respect of such employment is then complete.

Although reference books are not compulsory for females at the moment, it

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is in your interest and also that of your female servant that she takes out a reference book and has the necessary permission to take up employment in the area endorsed in her reference book. It may solve many problems later. All domestic servants supplied by the Municipal Labour Bureau have been medically examined and X-rayed for chest complaints, and registration of service contracts of servants whose documents are in order will be a mere formality.

- (iv) Upon registration a Labour Bureau fee of 25c is payable plus a monthly registration fee of 20c per male.
- (v) The employer must then complete Section "B" of the reference book indicating the date of engagement and his own name and address.

N.B. It is of value in cases of emergency, illness or death, if the employer makes an accurate note of the Bantu's exact residential address and keeps an independent record of this information.

- (vi) During the currency of employment the employer is obliged to sign the reference book before the 7th of every month to prove that the worker is still in his employment.
- (vii) Employers must endorse Section "B" of the reference book of all employees going on leave, giving the address where he is going and the date of return, then sign and date the endorsement. Such an endorsement is valid for six months and no difficulty will be experienced if the worker returns within that period. If, however, he overstays this period he is regarded as having been discharged and he will have to apply for re-registration.
- (viii) An employee may return to his old employer within 12 months after his discharge without prior application for his admission, subject to his being re-employed in his old job. However, a new service contract must again be registered and the fee of 25c paid.
- (ix) Native Services Levy Fees of 27½c per week for each male employee not physically housed by the employer are payable.
- (x) Registration fees must be paid during the period of leave, but not Services Levy charges.

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- (xi) The "F" Card should be kept by the employer until his employee leaves his service. Then it should be completed in full and posted to the address printed on the card. The wages being paid at date of discharge should also be specified. The reference book should be dated and signed in the discharge column.
- (xii) It would be good policy to register for a new employee when you forward the "F" card, if you desire to fill the vacancy.
- (xiii) If you wish to introduce a particular employee from outside the Johannesburg Municipal area for whatever reason, an application must be submitted to your Local Labour Bureau beforehand. Applications cannot be considered if the prospective employees have been introduced into the area before the applications are made, and they have therefore arrived in the area unlawfully.
- (xiv) Persons under the age of 18 years must have the written consent of their parents or guardians and the Bantu Affairs Commissioner before they will be allowed to take up employment in Johannesburg. Permission for the introduction of persons under 20 years is very rarely given.
- (xv) Persons from outside the Republic of South Africa and South West Africa are subject to the following additional restrictions:-
 - (a) New entrants from outside the High Commission Territories (Bechuanaland, Basutoland, Swaziland) will very rarely, if ever, be allowed entry.
 - (b) Anybody in this category losing his or her employment in Johannesburg requires renewed permission from the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development or a person duly authorised by him (usually the Bantu Affairs Commissioner) to take up employment with somebody else.
 - (c) Persons from the High Commission Territories desirous of returning home on leave must be in possession of the following permits:-
 - (1) Re-entry permit obtainable from the Local Labour Bureau.
 - (2) Re-entry permit issued by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner (Immigration Section), Market Street West.
 - (3) An entry permit to the relevant High Commission Territory issued by the Agent for the High Commission Territories, Windward House, 22 Thorpe Street, Selby, Johannesburg.
 - (d) Natives from outside the Republic of South Africa, etc. need special permission from the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development

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to enter, remain and take up employment in the area. Such permission is necessary every time they change their employment. It is not now policy to renew such permits.

- (e) If they are in lawful employment in the area and desire to return home on leave they require -
 - (1) Re-entry permit from the Local Labour Bureau and
 - (2) Re-entry permit from the Bantu Affairs Commissioner (Immigration)

In contra-distinction to these, employers who try and secure the registration of servants who are not qualified to live and work in the city, i.e. those whose reference books carry no endorsement or carry one of the endorsements mentioned on Pages 5 and 6, will encounter almost insuperable difficulties and it is for this reason that the reference book of a would-be employee be carefully examined before becoming involved in considerable delays and difficulties.

- (xvi) On termination of employment the employer is required to "sign off" the Bantu's reference book in the appropriate place in Section B giving the exact date when the contract of service was concluded, and Card "F" completed and sent to the Local authority without delay.

The above is a brief summary of a very involved legal situation and employers will, no doubt, come up against numerous other problems during the course of their dealings with their Bantu servants. Please do not hesitate to ring the Local Labour Bureau for help and advice.

In addition the Non-European Affairs Department maintains a medical examination service for Bantu employees and it is desirable that all of them are medically examined and their chests X-rayed regularly once a year. Appointments for such examinations could be made with the Medical Officer in charge at the relevant branch of the Local Labour Bureau.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE OCCUPATION OF HOUSES IN MUNICIPAL TOWNSHIPS.

An increasing number of Bantu servants are living with their families in houses which they rent from the Johannesburg City Council in the Bantu townships and employers should know something of the basis on which these houses are let and occupied.

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In the first place this Department will only let or sell a house to a man who is lawfully qualified to live and work in the city and who is the head of a stable and recognised family unit. In other words, he must be a married man and his wife must also qualify to be in the city.

People who are desirous of living in a Municipal house must register with the Department's Housing Officer at Room 224, Second Floor, 80 Albert Street, Johannesburg. When he becomes eligible for a house he will be required to submit proof of his income because the rent is dependent on the amount that he earns. The houses vary in size but consist in the main of a four-roomed cottage standing in its own ground, with waterborne sanitation and electric light either available or in the process of installation, and the economic rent for such a cottage is approximately R5.75 per month, which must be paid in advance to the local Location Superintendent by not later than the 7th of every month. Employers should impress upon their servants that they must keep their rent payments up to date because if they fail to do so they will get into serious trouble and will lose their house; therefore any tenant of a Municipal house who has any difficulty with his rent must make immediate arrangements with his Location Superintendent for the paying off of his debt. It should be impressed on servants that the Location Superintendents are there to assist and advise the tenants and that people must not be afraid to approach him personally in difficulties of this sort, in fact it is their duty to do so.

In addition to the rental charge, people living in the Municipal townships are also faced with transport fees which vary according to the distance to be travelled but which can total R2.20 per month as a maximum plus such bus fares as may be incurred. For this reason, wages - particularly of casually employed servants - must take these transport charges into account and servants should not be expected to bear the whole of their train and bus fares. The Department's experience is that the majority of tenants living in the Municipal townships struggle unsuccessfully against severe loads of poverty because of low wages and cannot in many cases meet their basic living costs of rent, transport, food and clothing.

It is hoped that the information set out in this little booklet will help employers of Bantu labour in some of the practical difficulties which may arise.

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and is also available in Afrikaans.

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