

Hours of work

Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws

If your workplace has been impacted by coronavirus, we have information about your workplace rights and obligations at [Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws \(https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws\)](https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws) .

A number of temporary changes have been introduced due to coronavirus including:

- [JobKeeper \(https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/jobkeeper-wage-subsidy-scheme/default\)](https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/jobkeeper-wage-subsidy-scheme/default) – changes to the Fair Work Act to support the JobKeeper wage subsidy scheme
- [temporary award changes \(https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/temporary-changes-to-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus\)](https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/temporary-changes-to-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus) – allowing for temporary workplace flexibility in some awards
- [pandemic leave \(https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/quarantine-self-isolation\)](https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/quarantine-self-isolation) – unpaid and paid pandemic leave (including worker and disaster payments) during coronavirus.

These changes may affect the information on this page.

Ordinary hours are an employee's normal and regular hours of work, which do not attract overtime rates.

Awards, enterprise agreements and other [registered agreements \(www.fairwork.gov.au/Dictionary.aspx?TermID=2034\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Dictionary.aspx?TermID=2034) set out any:

- maximum ordinary hours in a day, week, fortnight or month,
- minimum ordinary hours in a day,
- times of the day ordinary hours can be worked (eg. between 7am - 7pm).

The ordinary hours can be different for full-time, part-time and casual employees.

Spread of hours

The time of the day ordinary hours are worked is called the spread of hours (eg. between 7am - 7pm). Time worked outside the spread of ordinary hours can attract overtime rates.

Find more information about maximum and minimum hours of work and the spread of hours in your award by selecting from the list below.

Based on what you've told us, it looks like you're covered by the Plumbing and Fire Sprinklers Award [MA000036].

Maximum number hours

The maximum number of ordinary hours employees can work is:

- 8 hours per day
- an average of 38 hours per week (for a full-time employee).

Check clause 29.6 of the Plumbing Award for information on how to change ordinary hours.

Averaging weekly hours

An employer and a majority of employee can average employees' hours over a 4 week work cycle.

This means an employee may work more than 38 hours one week, but less in another.

Spread of hours

The ordinary hours in the Plumbing Award can be worked during 7am - 6pm Monday to Friday.

An employee can also be directed to work ordinary hours of work on a Saturday or Sunday, but an additional loading must be paid for this work.

Changing the spread of hours

An employer and its employees can agree to start work earlier than 7am, so long as the starting time is between 6am - 8am.

Minimum hours

Each time a casual employee works, they have to be given at least 3 hours of work. If they aren't given at least these hours, they still have to be paid a minimum of 3 hours.

The minimum daily hours for full-time and part-time employees depends on their rostered hours.

Arranging hours of work

An employer and the majority of employees can agree to different arrangements for organising an employee's 38 hour week. The matters that can be changed by agreement include:

- how the hours are averaged over a work cycle (usually 4 weeks but this can also be changed by agreement, up to a maximum of 3 months)
- how employees can accumulate a rostered day off
- working longer than 8 hours each day (but within the spread of ordinary hours).

To find out more about who this award applies to, go to the [Plumbing Award summary \(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/awards/award-summary/ma000036-summary\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/awards/award-summary/ma000036-summary) .

Source reference: [Plumbing and Fire Sprinklers Award \[MA000036\] clauses 14, 29 and 32](http://awardviewer.fwo.gov.au/award/show/MA000036) ^{PDF} (<http://awardviewer.fwo.gov.au/award/show/MA000036>)

Maximum weekly hours

An employee can work a maximum of 38 hours in a week unless an employer asks them to work reasonable extra hours. See our [Maximum weekly hours fact sheet \(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/fact-sheets/minimum-workplace-entitlements/maximum-weekly-hours\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/fact-sheets/minimum-workplace-entitlements/maximum-weekly-hours) .

Source reference: [Fair Work Act 2009 s.62](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2009A00028) ^{PDF} (<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2009A00028>)

Think a mistake might have been made?

Mistakes can happen. The best way to fix them usually starts with talking.

Check out our [Help resolving workplace issues \(www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/how-we-help-you/help-resolving-workplace-issues/default\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/how-we-help-you/help-resolving-workplace-issues/default) section for practical advice on:

- figuring out if a mistake has been made
- talking to your employer or employee about fixing it
- getting help from us if you can't resolve it.

Help for small business

- Find tools, resources and information you might need on our [Small business page \(www.fairwork.gov.au/Find-help-for/Small-business/default\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Find-help-for/Small-business/default) .

You might also be interested in

- [When overtime applies \(www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/hours-of-work-breaks-and-rosters/Hours-of-work/when-over-time-applies\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/hours-of-work-breaks-and-rosters/Hours-of-work/when-over-time-applies)
- [Breaks \(www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/hours-of-work-breaks-and-rosters/breaks\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/hours-of-work-breaks-and-rosters/breaks)
- [Rosters \(www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/hours-of-work-breaks-and-rosters/rosters\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/hours-of-work-breaks-and-rosters/rosters)
- [Rostered days off \(www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/hours-of-work-breaks-and-rosters/rostered-days-off\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/hours-of-work-breaks-and-rosters/rostered-days-off)
- [Flexibility in the workplace \(www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/Flexibility-in-the-workplace/default\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/Flexibility-in-the-workplace/default)
- [Maximum weekly hours fact sheet \(www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/fact-sheets/minimum-workplace-entitlements/maximum-weekly-hours\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/fact-sheets/minimum-workplace-entitlements/maximum-weekly-hours)

Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

Need language help?

Contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50

Hearing & speech assistance

Call through the National Relay Service (NRS):

For TTY: 13 36 77. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

Speak & Listen: 1300 555 727. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

The Fair Work Ombudsman is committed to providing advice that you can rely on. The information contained on this website is general in nature. If you are unsure about how it applies to your situation you can call our Infoline on 13 13 94 or speak with a union, industry association or workplace relations professional. Visitors are warned that this site may inadvertently contain names or pictures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have recently died.