

Ending employment during parental leave

Find out about obligations for resignation, dismissal and redundancy while on unpaid parental leave, and entitlements when a business changes owners.

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Resigning from a job while on parental leave

An employee can resign from their job while they're on parental leave. They:

- have to give the correct notice period to their employer
- can use their parental leave as the notice period.

Notice periods can be different in each award and [registered agreement \(www.fairwork.gov.au/Dictionary.aspx?TermID=2034\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Dictionary.aspx?TermID=2034) . Check the [Resignation - how much notice? \(www.fairwork.gov.au/Ending-employment/notice-and-final-pay/resignation-how-much-notice\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Ending-employment/notice-and-final-pay/resignation-how-much-notice) page for more about notice periods under awards.

Dismissed by an employer while on parental leave

If an employer dismisses an employee while they're on parental leave, they need to give the employee notice. Employers can:

- give the employee their notice and the notice period runs while the employee is on parental leave. This means the employee's employment ends when the notice period ends.
- make a payment in lieu of the notice period. For example, an employee who is entitled to 3 weeks' notice will get 3 weeks' pay instead.

More information:

- [Dismissal - how much notice? \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ending-employment/notice-and-final-pay/dismissal-how-much-notice\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ending-employment/notice-and-final-pay/dismissal-how-much-notice) - for information about minimum notice periods
- [Notice and final pay \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ending-employment/notice-and-final-pay\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ending-employment/notice-and-final-pay) - for information about how to give an employee notice
- [Notice of termination & leave \(www.fairwork.gov.au/library/k600433_notice-of-termination-leave\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/library/k600433_notice-of-termination-leave) - for more information about how notice periods interact with leave.

Reasons for dismissing an employee on parental leave

An employer can't dismiss an employee because:

- of family or caring responsibilities
- they are pregnant
- they are on maternity or parental leave, or
- they are temporarily absent from work due to illness or injury.

This may be seen as discrimination, and it's unlawful to dismiss an employee for any of these reasons.

Redundancy while on parental leave

If an employee's job is made redundant while on parental leave, the employer has to:

- give them the correct notice
- pay out any entitlements, including redundancy pay.

All awards and registered agreements have a consultation process for when there are major changes to the workplace, such as

redundancies.

Employers have to talk to an employee on unpaid parental leave if they decide to make a significant change in the workplace that will affect the employee's job. This has to occur as the decision is made, not when the employee comes back to work from parental leave.

Parental leave entitlements when a business changes owners

When a business changes owners, also known as a 'transfer of business', there might be a transfer of employment. This means that an employee keeps working at the business, but their employment transfers to the new business owner.

In this circumstance, employees entitled to unpaid parental leave with the old employer are still entitled to it with the new employer. This is because the new employer is required to recognise the employee's service with the old employer for parental leave entitlements.

This entitlement is recognised when the employee:

- provides the correct notice and evidence of intent to take parental leave under the old employer, or
- has already started unpaid parental leave with the old employer.

Need help resolving workplace issues about pregnancy, parental leave and returning to work?

For employees:

If you've lost your job, contact the Fair Work Commission (the Commission) first if you think you were sacked because of:

- discrimination
- a reason that is harsh, unjust or unreasonable
- another protected right.

You have 21 days from the day you were sacked to lodge an application with the Commission. Check the information at the Commission website to find out if you can apply for:

- [unfair dismissal](https://www.fwc.gov.au/termination-of-employment/unfair-dismissal) (https://www.fwc.gov.au/termination-of-employment/unfair-dismissal) (not available if you lost your job because of a genuine [redundancy](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Ending-employment/Redundancy/default) (www.fairwork.gov.au/Ending-employment/Redundancy/default))
- [a general protections dismissal](https://www.fwc.gov.au/termination-employment/general-protections-dismissal) (https://www.fwc.gov.au/termination-employment/general-protections-dismissal)
- [unlawful termination](https://www.fwc.gov.au/termination-employment/unlawful-termination) (https://www.fwc.gov.au/termination-employment/unlawful-termination)

For employees and employers:

- Find information, downloadable guides and toolkits on pregnancy, parental leave and parents in the workplace on the [Supporting working parents](http://www.supportingworkingparents.gov.au/) (http://www.supportingworkingparents.gov.au/) website.
- Learn about [discrimination](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/Protections-at-work/protections-from-discrimination-at-work) (www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/Protections-at-work/protections-from-discrimination-at-work) and [bullying and harassment](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/bullying-harassment-discrimination-in-the-workplace/bullying-and-harassment) (www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/bullying-harassment-discrimination-in-the-workplace/bullying-and-harassment) and what can be done to stop it.
- If you think a mistake has been made about pay, parental leave or returning to work, see our [Fixing a workplace problem](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/fixing-a-workplace-problem/default) (www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/fixing-a-workplace-problem/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 still can't resolve it.

Tools and resources

- [Best practice guide on parental leave](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/parental-leave) (www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/parental-leave)
- [List of awards](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/awards/list-of-awards/list-of-awards) (www.fairwork.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/awards/list-of-awards/list-of-awards)
- [Fair Work Commission's website](https://www.fwc.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/agreements) (https://www.fwc.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/agreements)

Related information

- [Notice and final pay](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Ending-employment/notice-and-final-pay/default) (www.fairwork.gov.au/Ending-employment/notice-and-final-pay/default)
- [Redundancy](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ending-employment/redundancy/default) (www.fairwork.gov.au/ending-employment/redundancy/default)
- [Unfair dismissal](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ending-employment/unfair-dismissal) (www.fairwork.gov.au/ending-employment/unfair-dismissal)
- [Protection from discrimination at work](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/protections-at-work/protection-from-discrimination-at-work) (www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/protections-at-work/protection-from-discrimination-at-work)
- [Employee entitlements on a transfer of business](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/When-businesses-change-owners/employee-entitlements-on-a-transfer-of-business) (www.fairwork.gov.au/Employee-entitlements/When-businesses-change-owners/employee-entitlements-on-a-transfer-of-business)

Help for small business

Find tools, resources and information you might need in our [Small business showcase](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/small-business-showcase/default) (www.fairwork.gov.au/small-business-showcase/default) .

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.