

## Communication in the workplace

Good communication practices can help prevent workplace problems from occurring, and resolve issues quickly. Employers and employees are both responsible for communicating with each other at and about work.

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### Importance of communication

In our experience, if issues arise in the workplace, having an open and respectful conversation can help to resolve the problem. It is best to raise any issues or concerns as early as possible. This can help prevent small issues from becoming big problems later on.

We understand that this may not always be possible and you may need to seek our help to resolve the problem.

To find out how to solve a wide range of workplace problems, see our [Fixing a workplace problem \(www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/fixing-a-workplace-problem/default\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/fixing-a-workplace-problem/default) section.

### Employees

Employees have a responsibility just like employers to make sure they communicate effectively in the workplace. If you have a question about your work or a workplace issue, we encourage you to speak to your employer about it first.

We have a number of resources to help you prepare for conversations with your employer, including:

- [An employee's guide to resolving workplace issues \(DOCX 397.2KB\) \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employees-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.docx.aspx\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employees-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.docx.aspx)  [\(PDF 570.8KB\) \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employees-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.pdf.aspx\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employees-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.pdf.aspx)
- [Effective dispute resolution guide \(www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/effective-dispute-resolution\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/effective-dispute-resolution)  [\(www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/effective-dispute-resolution\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/effective-dispute-resolution)
- [Difficult conversations in the workplace - employee course \(www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/online-learning-centre/difficult-conversations-in-the-workplace-employee-course\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/online-learning-centre/difficult-conversations-in-the-workplace-employee-course)

Find more information on our [Know your rights and obligations \(www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/preventing-workplace-problems/know-your-rights-and-obligations\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/preventing-workplace-problems/know-your-rights-and-obligations) page.

You can also [contact us \(www.fairwork.gov.au/contact-us/default\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/contact-us/default) for further advice before you speak to your employer.

### Employers

Good communication starts from the day you hire a new employee. You should make sure that your employees are comfortable asking you questions and raising issues or concerns with you or a manager. This way any issues can be identified and resolved as quickly as possible.

Most awards and agreements require making a copy of the award or enterprise agreement available and easily accessible to staff. Making sure staff are aware of their classifications within their award or agreement can also help staff understand your expectations.

You can use our [templates \(www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/templates/templates\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/templates/templates) to set out clear expectations of your employees' role and workplace behaviour.

There are many ways you can continue to communicate in the workplace, including:

- regular staff meetings

- performance reviews
- feedback sessions.

### Best practice tip

Setting clear expectations from the start of employment and making important workplace information readily available can help prevent workplace problems. This could include:

- providing information about leave balances
- communicating the process, expectations and any restrictions about requesting leave
- outlining where staff can access dispute resolution processes.

## Consultation

Consultation with employees about changes to their role, employment conditions, or the work environment is critical for a productive and engaging workplace. Consultation is also required in some situations. Check your award or agreement for consultation provisions. Consultation also helps staff feel engaged and supported.

Find more information in our [Consultation and cooperation in the workplace guide \(www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/consultation-and-cooperation-in-the-workplace\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/consultation-and-cooperation-in-the-workplace) .

## Workplace conversations

Raising issues in the workplace may be uncomfortable, whether that be with your employer, employee, or a colleague. Our online courses can help you be more confident having difficult conversations in the workplace.

- [Difficult conversations in the workplace - employee course \(www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/online-learning-centre/difficult-conversations-in-the-workplace-employee-course\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/online-learning-centre/difficult-conversations-in-the-workplace-employee-course)
- [Difficult conversations in the workplace - manager course \(www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/online-learning-centre/difficult-conversations-in-the-workplace-manager-course\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/online-learning-centre/difficult-conversations-in-the-workplace-manager-course)

## Tools and resources

- [An employer's guide to resolving workplace issues \(DOCX 397.1KB\) \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employers-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.docx.aspx\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employers-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.docx.aspx)  [\(PDF 470.3KB\) \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employers-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.pdf.aspx\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employers-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.pdf.aspx)
- [An employee's guide to resolving workplace issues \(DOCX 397.2KB\) \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employees-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.docx.aspx\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employees-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.docx.aspx)  [\(PDF 570.8KB\) \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employees-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.pdf.aspx\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/712/an-employees-guide-to-resolving-workplace-issues.pdf.aspx)
- [Consultation and cooperation in the workplace guide \(www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/consultation-and-cooperation-in-the-workplace\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/consultation-and-cooperation-in-the-workplace)
- [Effective dispute resolution guide \(www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/effective-dispute-resolution\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/effective-dispute-resolution)
- [Managing performance course \(www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/online-learning-centre/managing-performance\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/online-learning-centre/managing-performance)

## Related information

- [Fixing a workplace problem \(www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/fixing-a-workplace-problem/default\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/fixing-a-workplace-problem/default)
- [Managing performance & warnings \(www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/managing-performance-and-warnings\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/managing-performance-and-warnings)

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### Contact us

Fair Work Online: [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://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

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