

# A guide to starting a new job



Starting a new job can be an exciting time. It can also be a little nerve-racking. Although every workplace is different, there are some rights and responsibilities that apply to all employees and employers. Know your rights and responsibilities before you start work, so you can focus on settling into your new job.

This guide provides the information you need to know and links to further information. You can also access our Starting a new job online course at [fairwork.gov.au/learning](https://fairwork.gov.au/learning)



# Your rights and entitlements

This guide is for employees starting a new job.

Most employers and employees in Australia are covered by the Fair Work Act (FW Act). The FW Act sets out your workplace rights and obligations. Before starting a new job make sure you know the answers to these important questions.

## What are the National Employment Standards?

The FW Act contains the National Employment Standards (NES). The NES are the minimum standards of employment and cover:

1. **Maximum weekly hours** — 38 hours per week, plus reasonable additional hours.
2. **Requests for flexible working arrangements** — certain employees can request a change in their working arrangements.
3. **Parental leave** — up to 12 months of unpaid leave per employee, as well as the right to request an additional 12 months of leave.
4. **Annual leave** — 4 weeks of paid leave per year, plus an additional week for some shiftworkers.
5. **Sick and carer's leave (sometimes called personal leave) and compassionate leave** — 10 days per year paid sick and carer's leave (pro-rata for part-time employees), 2 days of unpaid carer's leave as required, and 2 days of compassionate leave (unpaid for casuals) as required.
6. **Family and domestic violence leave** — 10 days of paid leave per year.
7. **Community service leave** — unpaid leave for voluntary emergency management activities and leave for jury duty.
8. **Long service leave** — paid leave for employees who have been with the same employer for a long time.
9. **Public holidays** — an entitlement to a day off on a public holiday, unless reasonably requested to work.

10. **Notice of termination and redundancy pay** — up to 5 weeks notice of termination and up to 16 weeks redundancy pay.

11. **Superannuation (super)** — if you're eligible for super, your employer must make contributions to your super fund under super guarantee laws. Super is also a NES entitlement. For more information see our Tax and superannuation page at [fairwork.gov.au/super](https://fairwork.gov.au/super)

12. **Fair Work Information Statement and Casual Employment Information Statement** —

- the Fair Work Information Statement must be provided to all new employees before, or as soon as possible after they start a new job. Find it at [fairwork.gov.au/fwis](https://fairwork.gov.au/fwis)
- the Casual Employment Information statement must also be provided to casual employees when they start employment, and at set times throughout their employment. Find it at [fairwork.gov.au/ceis](https://fairwork.gov.au/ceis)

13. **Employee choice about casual employment** — Pathways for a casual employee to become a full-time or part-time employee in some circumstances. For more information, visit our Employee choice page at [fairwork.gov.au/employeechoice](https://fairwork.gov.au/employeechoice)

Some rules and exclusions apply. For more information about the NES go to [fairwork.gov.au/nas](https://fairwork.gov.au/nas)

## Am I full-time, part-time or casual?

Your type of employment will affect your hours of work, your rate of pay and some of your entitlements. You should ask your employer what your employment type will be before you start your new job.

- **Full-time employees** usually work on average 38 hours per week, plus reasonable additional hours.
- **Part-time employees** work on average less than 38 hours per week. These employees work a regular pattern of hours which are usually recorded in writing. Part-time employees get entitlements such as annual leave and sick and carer's leave on a pro-rata basis, based on their ordinary hours of work.

- **Casual employees** — From 26 August 2024, an employee is casual if:
  - there isn't a firm advance commitment to ongoing work, and
  - they're entitled to receive a casual loading or specific casual pay rate.

When assessing if there is or isn't a firm advance commitment to ongoing work, there are several factors to consider, including the real substance, practical reality and true nature of the employment relationship.

A regular pattern of work doesn't automatically mean the employee is permanent. Casual employees do not get paid sick leave or annual leave and are not usually entitled to notice of termination or redundancy pay, even if they work regularly for a long time.

For more information about casual employment visit our Casual employees page at [fairwork.gov.au/casual](https://fairwork.gov.au/casual)

You could also be either a fixed term employee and/or a junior employee. Ask your employer if you're not sure.

- **Fixed term employees** are engaged for a set period of time, or for a season. For example, a fixed term employee may be used to cover a parental leave absence or to work on a particular project. Fixed term employees can be full-time, part-time or casual.

Employees on new fixed term contracts must be given the Fixed Term Contract Information Statement. You can download a copy at [fairwork.gov.au/ftcis](https://fairwork.gov.au/ftcis)

For more information on the rules about fixed term contracts, visit our Fixed term employees page at [fairwork.gov.au/fixed-term-employees](https://fairwork.gov.au/fixed-term-employees)

- **Junior employees** are usually under 21 years of age. Junior employees generally get the same entitlements as adult employees but often get a lower rate of pay based on their age. For more information see our Junior pay rates page at [fairwork.gov.au/junior-pay-rates](https://fairwork.gov.au/junior-pay-rates)

## What award or agreement covers my employment?

Your new job is likely to be covered by an award or enterprise agreement. These are legal documents that provide entitlements such as rates of pay and breaks.

### Awards

Awards automatically cover employers and employees working in specific industries or occupations. To find the award that covers your new job, visit our Awards page at [fairwork.gov.au/awards](https://fairwork.gov.au/awards)

### Enterprise agreements

Enterprise agreements set out the terms and conditions of employment for a specific business or group of businesses. For an enterprise agreement to apply to your workplace, it needs to have been approved by the Fair Work Commission.

An agreement will generally override any award that would otherwise apply, although it does need to meet the minimum wages provided in the award.

For information on agreements, or to search for the agreement that applies in your workplace, visit [fwc.gov.au/enterprise-agreements](https://fwc.gov.au/enterprise-agreements)

### Award and agreement free employees

Some jobs will not be covered by an award or enterprise agreement. Employees in these types of jobs are award and agreement free but are still entitled to the National Minimum Wage and the NES. Find out more about award and agreement free employees at [fairwork.gov.au/award-free](https://fairwork.gov.au/award-free)

## What should I be paid?

You must be paid at least the minimum wage in your award or agreement. If you're award and agreement free, you must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage.

Wages may be paid by cash, cheque or electronic funds transfer (EFT) to your bank account.

Rates of pay in awards and agreements will depend on your duties, age, experience and qualifications. If your duties change, you may get a different rate of pay.

Minimum rates of pay usually increase on 1 July each year.

## What about tax and super?

In most cases, your employer should deduct tax from your wages. Paying 'cash in hand' without deducting tax is illegal.

In most cases your employer is also required to pay super for you. Super is paid in addition to your minimum wage — your employer cannot deduct it from your wages. Find out more about tax and super, including payment for employees under 18, at the Australian Taxation Office website at [ato.gov.au](https://ato.gov.au)

## What paperwork should I get?

You should get a pay slip from your employer no later than one day after pay day. Your employer should also be keeping records about your employment including details about your pay, hours of work, leave entitlements and any agreements that you've made such as an individual flexibility agreement.

## Do I have to complete a probation period?

Some employers will put new employees on a probation period to make sure they're suited to the job. Employees on probation should still be paid the correct minimum wage and get their NES entitlements, including notice of termination if the employer decides to end their employment.

## What should I watch out for?

- **Sham contracting:** your employer should not engage you as an independent contractor to avoid paying your entitlements when you're actually an employee.
- **Goods or services instead of pay:** you should be paid at least your minimum wage for all hours that you work. You shouldn't get things like food or clothes instead of your wages.
- **Deductions:** your employer can only take money out of your pay in limited circumstances. Your employer cannot take money out of your pay for breakages, till shortages or customers who don't pay.
- **Adverse action and discrimination:** your employer shouldn't take adverse action against you for exercising your workplace rights (for example taking leave under the NES) or for a discriminatory reason such as pregnancy, age, gender identity, sexuality or religion. Adverse action can include things like your employer ending your employment or cutting your shifts. Find out more about discrimination at [fairwork.gov.au/discrimination](https://fairwork.gov.au/discrimination)
- **Pay secrecy:** You have the right to talk about (or not talk about) your current or past pay, and the terms and conditions of employment that would be needed to work out your pay, such as hours of work. You can also ask other employees about their pay and terms and conditions of employment, but employees can't be forced to share this information if they don't want to. For more information about these rights, including when they started applying and who they apply to, see Prohibiting pay secrecy at [fairwork.gov.au/pay-secrecy](https://fairwork.gov.au/pay-secrecy)
- **Right to disconnect:** From 26 August 2024, eligible employees of [non-small business employers](https://fairwork.gov.au/non-small-business-employers) have the right to refuse to monitor, read or respond to contact (or attempted contact) outside their working hours, unless doing so is unreasonable. This includes contact (or attempted contact) from an employer or a third party, such as clients, suppliers, staff from other businesses, or members of the public. These rules apply to employees of [small business employers](https://fairwork.gov.au/small-business-employers) from 26 August 2025. For more information see Right to disconnect at [fairwork.gov.au/right-to-disconnect](https://fairwork.gov.au/right-to-disconnect)
- **Right to join a union:** All workers have the right to choose to join or not join a union and to be represented in their workplace by a union. Workers can also choose whether to take part in lawful industrial action. Unions can provide their members with information, advice and support throughout their employment. For information about how to find and join a union, visit Australian Unions at [australianunions.org.au](https://australianunions.org.au)



## Your responsibilities

As an employee you have responsibilities to your employer. The work that you do will be helping your employer to run their business so you should make sure that you're working to the best of your ability. You should perform all the duties of your new job and follow any lawful and reasonable directions that your employer gives you.

You should also let your employer know if there is anything in the workplace that concerns you.

Make sure that you know about and follow the workplace's policies and procedures, including those that relate to a safe and healthy workplace. Part of contributing to a safe and healthy workplace is ensuring that you do not discriminate, bully, harass or sexually harass other employees or anyone else you interact with in your new role. You should also make sure that you don't reveal any confidential information about the business.

It will be important to your new employer that you are punctual and reliable. You should let your employer know as soon as possible if you can't make it to work. For example, if you're sick or need to care for someone who is sick. Find out your employer's preferred way of notifying them.



## Your first day

You'll need to remember a lot of new things on your first day. Don't be afraid to ask questions to try and find out what you can before you start.

- **Work location** — where you were interviewed might not be where you'll be working, so check where you need to go on your first day.
- **Supervisor** — make sure you know who you need to talk to when you arrive on your first day.
- **Hours of work** — know when you need to arrive on the first day and what hours you'll work.
- **Travel arrangements** — in some industries your employer will provide you with transport to work. If yours doesn't, you should work out how you'll get to work and how long it will take.
- **Dress code** — find out what you should wear. If the business has a uniform you should arrange to collect this.
- **Facilities** — find out if the business has a kitchen or meals area and what facilities are available for you to prepare or buy your meals.
- **Your duties** — find out what type of tasks you'll be doing.
- **Paperwork** — you'll generally need to fill in forms about tax and super, provide your employer with your bank details and you might also need to sign a contract, a confidentiality agreement or other documents.
- **Workplace policies** — find out what the policies and procedures are in your new workplace. These can cover things like social media use, public holidays and sick leave procedures.

### Be MoneySmart

Now that you're earning money you want to be smart about what you do with it. The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) have free Be MoneySmart online training modules to help apprentices and VET school students manage their money and learn skills that will help them in the future. For more information visit the MoneySmart website at [moneysmart.gov.au](https://moneysmart.gov.au)



## Fixing workplace problems

Even in the best workplaces there may be times when problems arise. Sometimes they will be minor and will be easily fixed, but sometimes the situation will be more complex.

Although it can be difficult, it's important that you try to deal with any problems straight away, otherwise they can get worse.

As soon as you can, you should speak with your employer about the problem. If you're not sure how to start this conversation you should look at our free Difficult conversations in the workplace — employee course at [fairwork.gov.au/learning](https://fairwork.gov.au/learning)

You need to be prepared to work with your employer to fix the problem. Remember that they also need to consider other employees.

If you take a flexible and practical approach to fixing the problem, you and your employer should be able to find the solution that best suits everyone involved.



## Getting the most out of your job

When you start a new job, you want to make the most of this opportunity. Be flexible and positive. If your employer has put you on a probation period, work with them to see how you're performing and how you can improve your work. Once you've finished your probation period, you can keep looking for ways to be a good employee. For example, you can use your initiative, organise and prioritise your work and look for better ways of doing things. Even once your probation period is finished you should continue working with your employer to improve your skills and knowledge. Keep learning on the job and remember there might also be formal training opportunities.

Everyone wants to work in a happy and productive workplace. Part of being a great employee is contributing to a positive workplace culture. You can do this by assisting other employees where appropriate and working cooperatively with your team.

You should also think about the way that you work with your employer. If you show your employer that you are a trustworthy employee and build a good working relationship, it will be easier to talk to them about work and any problems that arise.



## There are skills that will help you succeed in your new job

These include:

- being a clear communicator
- working well in a team
- problem-solving
- planning and organising your work
- working independently
- learning and developing new skills
- using relevant technology
- showing initiative and contributing.

You can improve some of these skills by completing our Starting a new job online course at [fairwork.gov.au/learning](https://fairwork.gov.au/learning)





## Your employment details

This checklist will help you make sure you have all the information you need when starting a new job.

If you're not sure of the answer, speak to your new boss or contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.



### First day

Where do you need to go on your first day?

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What time do you start on your first day?

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Who do you need to report to on your first day?

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### Paperwork

Have you signed and completed all the paperwork you need to give your employer?

- ☐ Letter of offer/employment contract
- ☐ Tax File Number declaration form
- ☐ Superannuation standard choice form

Find more information about tax and super from the ATO at [ato.gov.au](http://ato.gov.au)

- ☐ Other (for example deductions, policies):

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What information do you need to take on your first day?

- ☐ Bank account details
- ☐ Tax file number
- ☐ Licences (for example a driver's licence or RSA)
- ☐ Passport and visa (if you're visiting and working in Australia)
- ☐ Proof of age (if you're under 21)

- ☐ Qualifications and/or school records
- ☐ Apprenticeship or traineeship papers
- ☐ Emergency contact details
- ☐ Other:

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### Uniform

Do you have to wear a uniform for work?

- ☐ Yes, my employer has already provided it or will provide it on my first day
- ☐ Yes, I need to buy the uniform
- ☐ No, but I understand the dress code



### Tools

Do you need tools for work?

- ☐ Yes, my employer has already provided them or will give them to me on my first day
- ☐ Yes, I need to bring or buy my own tools
- ☐ No, I don't need tools



### Award or agreement

What's your award or agreement?

- ☐ My award or agreement is:
- 
- ☐ I'm not covered by an award or agreement

To find out more about awards go to [fairwork.gov.au/awards](http://fairwork.gov.au/awards)



### Employment type

Are you full time, part time or casual?

- ☐ Full-time
- ☐ Part-time
- ☐ Casual



Are you ongoing (permanent) or fixed term?

- ☐ Ongoing (permanent)
- ☐ Fixed term

Are you a junior and/or an apprentice or trainee?

- ☐ Junior
- ☐ Apprentice or trainee
- ☐ I'm not a junior, apprentice or trainee



## Probation

Do you have to complete a probation period?

- ☐ Yes, my probation period is from:  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ No, I do not have a probation period



## Duties

Do you know what your main duties will be?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, I need to follow this up with my employer



## Pay

What is your base rate of pay?

- ☐ My rate of pay is:  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

How you will be paid?

- ☐ Direct deposit/EFT
- ☐ Cheque
- ☐ Cash

How often will you be paid?

- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Fortnightly
- ☐ Monthly

How will you be given your pay slip?

- ☐ Paper copy
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Online employee portal
- ☐ Other:  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Hours and shifts

What are the minimum hours you will work each week?

\_\_\_\_\_ hours per week

Do you know what your roster will be?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, I need to follow this up with my employer



## Meal and rest breaks

What meal and rest breaks are you entitled to?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Tip:** It's a good idea to keep your own diary to record:

- the dates you worked
- the time you started and finished
- your break times
- the name of your supervisor on your shift
- any leave you take.



## Information Statements

Have you received a Fair Work Information Statement from your employer?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, I need to follow this up with my employer

If you are a casual employee, have you also received a Casual Employment Information Statement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, I need to follow this up with my employer
- ☐ I'm not a casual so this doesn't apply to me

If you're employed on a fixed term contract, have you also received a Fixed Term Contract Information Statement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, I need to follow this up with my employer
- ☐ I'm not on a fixed term contract so this doesn't apply to me

## Leave

Do you know what leave you're entitled to? Select those that apply to you:

- ☐ Annual leave
- ☐ Sick and carer's leave
- ☐ Compassionate leave
- ☐ Family and domestic violence leave
- ☐ Community service leave



## Things to find out on your first day at work

- ☐ Anything that I haven't been able to answer above!
- ☐ Where I should store my personal items
- ☐ What I should do if there is an emergency
- ☐ What the rules are about making personal calls, using social media, or having visitors at work
- ☐ Who I should contact if I'm sick or running late
- ☐ Who I should ask if I have questions about my job

### Find out more

For more information about starting a new job, complete our Starting a new job online course at [fairwork.gov.au/learning](https://fairwork.gov.au/learning)

## Contact us

Fair Work online: [fairwork.gov.au](https://fairwork.gov.au)

Fair Work Infoline: **13 13 94**

### Need language help?

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

### Help for people who are deaf or have hearing or speech difficulties

You can contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS).

Select your [preferred access option](#) and give our phone number: **13 13 94**

The Fair Work Ombudsman is committed to providing you with advice that you can rely on. The information contained in this fact sheet 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 a workplace relations professional.

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