5 Facts About Your Rights At Work You Should Know


The big wide world of employment can seem daunting at first. And I don’t mean the tasks you might have to do, like scrubbing off half eaten lasagna from the table, or finding the right shoe for display (whilst both are super important).

I’m taking facts, the truth, evidence, related to your rights and entitlements when you start a new job. There are some things you need to know. As somebody somewhere in history has said, “knowledge is power”. So, chomp on this knowledge to power you up.

1. Employment standards
This is like the workers bill of rights. The minimum standards you get as an employee. They apply to everyone, no matter if you’re under 17, or your work situation is a bit “off” and you feel a bit invisible in your position, you can always summon this if you’re in a pickle.
There’s ten, and you can check them out here or see below.

2. Know your award
This is the next level of your rights. You should ask your employer which award applies to you based on what industry you are in, or if they’ve got a registered enterprise agreement at that workplace. Dig out the facts from the FWO website to find what award applies to you and get in the know. If something isn’t right, bring up your award… and Boom!
Stand your ground. These rights cover things like your wages, breaks, and penalty rates to name a few

3. Type of employment
Be clear on your status of employment like whether you’re a full-time employee, which is around 38 hours a week. Or part-time which is less than that. This is important because you are entitled to things like paid sick leave, annual leave, and other safeguards.
If you’re a casual, you get a few extra bucks an hour and a couple of entitlements like unpaid compassionate leave, but no annual leave or paid sick leave. It’s less secure, so it may be worth a conversation with your employer on what status works best.

4. Keep records
It’s a really good idea to keep track of the days and hours worked to check them against your payslips (which are mandatory). Use the Record my Hours app to keep track of the hours you work. Have a copy of your Tax declaration form and your superannuation certificate so you can be sure your money is going where it should. The ATO [Australian Tax Office] are keen to make sure your tax is in order so follow their guidelines.

5. Have confidence!
Granted, this one is more advice than a fact. Knowing your rights and getting simple systems in place will help you to feel confident that you’re being treated fairly and you’re prepared in case problems do arise. Basically, you’ve just upgraded your superpower with a protective force field. You can stand your ground, confidently.
The Fair Work Ombudsman has a ton of tools and resources on their website to make sure you know your rights, so head here and start exploring!

Young people are some of the most vulnerable members of the workforce. Not having the right knowledge or experience means we’re more likely to have our rights exploited in the workplace. We decided to help change that. Educating Young Workers is a series we created with the good folks over at the Fair Work Ombudsman to share facts, help others understand their rights, and resolve issues
National Employment Standards

The National Employment Standards (NES) are 10 minimum employment entitlements that have to be provided to all employees.

The national minimum wage and the NES make up the minimum entitlements for employees in Australia. An award, employment contract, enterprise agreement or other registered agreement can't provide for conditions that are less than the national minimum wage or the NES. They can’t exclude the NES.

The 10 minimum entitlements of the NES are: (ctrl+click to follow each link)

- Maximum weekly hours
- Requests for flexible working arrangements
- Parental leave and related entitlements
- Annual leave
- Personal/carer’s leave, compassionate leave and unpaid family and domestic violence leave
- Community service leave
- Long service leave
- Public holidays
- Notice of termination and redundancy pay
- Fair Work Information Statement

Who's covered by the NES

All employees in the national workplace relations system are covered by the NES regardless of the award, registered agreement or employment contract that applies.

Casual Employees and the NES

Casual employees only get NES entitlements relating to:

- unpaid carer's leave
- unpaid compassionate leave
- unpaid family and domestic violence leave
- community service leave
- the Fair Work Information Statement.

In some states and territories long serving casuals are eligible for long service leave. Where there is an expectation of ongoing work for a casual and the casual has been employed regularly and systematically for at least 12 months, they have extra entitlements under the NES.

These are:

- the right to request for flexible working arrangements
- access to parental leave.