

STARTING  
WORK?  
KNOW  
YOUR  
LEGAL  
RIGHTS

**Anti Discrimination Board of NSW**

*Info about discrimination*

☎ 1800 670 812

📞 [www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb)

**WageNet**

*Info about Federal wages and work conditions*

☎ 1300 363 264 📞 [www.wagenet.gov.au](http://www.wagenet.gov.au)

**UnionsNSW**

*Info about unions*

☎ 02 9264 1691

📞 [www.unionsnsw.org.au](http://www.unionsnsw.org.au)

**Human Rights and Equal Opportunity  
Commission**

*Info about discrimination*

☎ 1300 656 419 📞 [www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au)

**Australian Tax Office**

*Info about tax*

☎ 13 28 61 📞 [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

STARTING

WORK?

KNOW YOUR

LEGAL

RIGHTS



## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK AND MAKE THEM WORK FOR YOU

This booklet tells you what your rights are at work from the day you start.

### Are you starting work?

Questions about your conditions at work? Call the Office of Industrial Relations on 13 16 28 or visit [www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au](http://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au)

Questions about your health and safety at work? Call WorkCover NSW on 13 10 50 or visit [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)

Be smart when starting work and tell your friends about their rights too.

## CONTACTS

### NSW Office of Industrial Relations

*Info about conditions at work*

☎ 13 16 28

📞 [www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au](http://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au)

📞 [www.youngpeopleatwork.nsw.gov.au](http://www.youngpeopleatwork.nsw.gov.au)

### WorkCover NSW Assistance Service

*Info about health and safety at work*

☎ 13 10 50 📞 [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)

### National Children's and Youth Law Centre

*Info about legal rights for people under 18*

☎ 02 9398 7488 📞 [www.lawstuff.org.au](http://www.lawstuff.org.au)

### NSW Commission for Children and Young People

*Info for children and young people*

☎ 02 9286 7276 📞 [www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au)

Tear out and keep in your wallet

### TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR CONDITIONS AT WORK

#### Office of Industrial Relations

☎ 13 16 28

### TO FIND OUT HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

#### WorkCover Assistance Service

☎ 13 10 50

# WHAT'S IN HERE?

Starting work	2
Your rights	4
Your pay	6
Your hours of work	8
Dealing with violence	9
Dealing with bullying	10
Dealing with harassment and discrimination	12
Your health and safety	14
Your safety training	15
Getting better after injury	16
Leaving work	18
Online services	20

**Hotline card at the back**

# STARTING WORK

Most job offers are made after an interview.

You may be put on a trial or on probation to see if you can do the job. If you accept, you must be paid for any work you do.

When you are offered a job, your employer should state in writing:

- what the job involves
- how much and when you will be paid
- your hours of work and conditions.

Your employer should also tell you if you will work under an award, enterprise or other agreement. These explain your pay and working conditions.

When you start your job you should receive training about risks in the workplace, using safety gear, using machinery and equipment, and evacuation procedures.

If you do work experience through your school you won't be paid.

## YOUR RIGHTS

As a guide, permanent full-time workers receive:

- 4 weeks paid holiday each year
- at least 5 days paid sick leave each year
- at least 12 months unpaid parental leave, if you have or adopt a child
- 2 months paid long service leave after 10 years of service.

You must have access to a copy of your award or agreement in your workplace.

Part-time workers receive these benefits on a proportional or 'pro rata' basis. Casual workers receive an

additional payment, called a loading, instead of sick leave or holiday pay.

You must obey any lawful and reasonable instructions given by your employer, unless they pose a danger to you or others in the workplace.

It is your choice whether or not you join a union.

Important – NSW law now ensures that all young workers under 18 must be given pay and conditions equal to the relevant NSW award – even if their employer is not under the state award system.

For more information, visit [www.youngpeopleatwork.nsw.gov.au](http://www.youngpeopleatwork.nsw.gov.au) or contact OIR on 13 16 28.

## YOUR PAY

Your employer must pay you at least the minimum rate shown in your award or agreement. This rate will depend on the type of work, and the actual times you work. Of course, you may be paid more.

Depending on your age, you may be paid a junior rate, which is less than the adult rate.

You may also be paid allowances for doing certain tasks, overtime pay for working outside your regular hours or penalty rates for working nights, weekends or public holidays.

You should be paid at least once a fortnight. You may be paid in cash, by cheque or deposit into your bank account.

Your employer cannot take money out of your pay without your written permission, or unless it is required by law, such as tax.

You must get a payslip, which shows your pay and any deductions, such as tax. It may also show an amount your employer has paid for your superannuation.

# YOUR HOURS OF WORK

Your award or agreement has information about your hours of work and meal breaks.

Most full-time workers usually work 38 hours per week.

Part-time workers work a regular number of hours and days each week, but fewer hours than full-time workers.

Casual workers are employed on an hourly or daily basis.

## DEALING WITH VIOLENCE

Violence at work can come from co-workers, supervisors or customers. It can involve assault, bullying or harassment, verbal or written abuse, or malicious damage. Violence can also include robbery or assault outside work, such as when employees do the banking or deliver goods. If you experience violence at work you should:

- report the incident to your employer
- contact WorkCover NSW
- contact your union
- contact the National Children's and Youth Law Centre.

Support is also available from the National Children's & Youth Law Centre, Kids Helpline or the Legal Aid Hotline for Under 18s.

# DEALING WITH BULLYING

Bullying can come from co-workers, supervisors or customers. Bullying is unwanted, offensive and frightening behaviour. It can involve:

- yelling or abusive language
- laughs or insults because of your lack of experience, appearance, race, religion or sexual preference
- physical abuse – people pushing, poking, hitting or threatening to hurt you.

Some bullying or violence against under 18 year olds may also be child abuse. You can get advice on your

particular situation from the NSW Commission for Children and Young People.

If you feel bullied:

- tell the person to stop
- tell your employer, your human resources manager or occupational health and safety representative
- keep a diary of events
- contact WorkCover NSW
- contact your union

Support is also available from the National Children's & Youth Law Centre, Kids Helpline or the Legal Aid Hotline for Under 18s.

# DEALING WITH HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

It is against the law for anyone to harass or discriminate against you at work because of your sex, pregnancy, race, marital status, disability, age, carer's responsibility, homosexuality or transgender status.

Any public behaviour that could make you the subject of hatred, contempt or ridicule because of your sexual preferences, or because you may have HIV or AIDS is also against the law.

There is also indirect discrimination. For example, an employer who says they need a person over 180cm tall to do a job is likely to be discriminating against women and some ethnic groups.

If you believe you have been harassed or discriminated against, contact:

- your employer or human resources manager
- your equal employment opportunity officer or grievance officer
- your union
- the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW.

# YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your employer must ensure you have safe systems of work, safe equipment and proper training. If you find problems like faulty equipment, slippery floors or a lack of safety gear, tell your employer immediately.

You must always:

- follow safety procedures
- report safety hazards
- correctly wear safety gear
- not put other people at risk.

Working after drinking alcohol or taking drugs is dangerous, especially if you are using equipment or others rely on you.

# YOUR SAFETY TRAINING

Your employer must make sure that you have enough information, training and supervision to work safely. Your training should include how to operate equipment correctly and use adequate safety gear.

If you are unhappy with your training you should tell your employer.

If nothing happens, see your occupational health and safety representative.

If you are still not satisfied contact WorkCover NSW for help and advice.

## GETTING BETTER AFTER INJURY

If you are injured at work you should:

- report the injury to your employer as soon as possible
- record the details of your injury in your workplace register of injuries
- get a WorkCover medical certificate from your doctor
- cooperate with your injury management and return-to-work plans.

If you are away from your usual duties for more than 7 days, your insurer will talk to you and your doctor about developing:

- an overall injury management plan
- a return-to-work plan prepared by your employer which specifies your duties, hours of work and any restrictions.

In most cases, you will receive weekly benefits and medical expenses within seven days of your employer notifying the insurance company.

Your treating doctor will organise treatment and complete your WorkCover medical certificates.

If you are concerned about the way your injury is being managed, contact the insurance company involved, WorkCover NSW and/or your union.

## LEAVING WORK

You or your employer can end your employment at any time by giving notice according to your award or agreement.

If you resign, you should check your award or agreement for how much notice you must give employer, otherwise you may risk losing wages.

If the business changes so that the job no longer exists you may be offered another job or be made redundant.

Your employer may dismiss you if your employment contract has finished or if you don't do your job properly.

Take all warnings from your employer seriously. You should be given a written warning, but three written warnings are not necessary.

You may be dismissed without notice if you have:

- acted dishonestly
- refused to follow reasonable instructions from your employer or person in charge
- behaved so badly that instant dismissal is justified (eg fighting).

Your employer should give you a reason for ending your employment.

Produced by the  
NSW Office of Industrial Relations  
and WorkCover NSW

**For copies of this booklet contact:**

WorkCover NSW

Tel: 1300 799 003

[www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)

*Catalogue No. 915 ISBN 1 876995 29 7*

*© OIR/WorkCover2007*





