

WELCOME TO THE WORKSITE GUIDE TO GETTING A GREAT START IN YOUR FIRST JOB.

These fact sheets look at important stuff like getting the correct pay, being treated fairly, staying safe and gaining skills.

In them you'll find a load of tips that every employee needs to know.

We'll also look at some scams and scandals that can suck in unsuspecting new employees and smart ways to avoid being ripped off.

We'll end with a Q&A section looking at common questions from employees.

1ST JOB FACT

Your pay must be at least the minimum rate in the award for your industry - it can be more, but it can't be less.

FIRST JOB FIRST UNION

Everyone who works is entitled to join a union - this is your legal right. People join unions so they can get information, advice and support in the workplace.

Unions also help negotiate pay increases and improvements at work.

Joining your first union is easy - simply call Unions Australia on 1300 486 466 or visit <https://joinup.actu.com.au>.

SEE THE FULL SET

Part One: A Fair Start

Part Two: A Fair Go for All

Part Three: Safety First

Part Four: Skills for Work

Q&A: Questions answered



YOUR FIRST JOB

The Guide to Getting

A Fair Start



Part One

PART ONE: Pay Check

We all know that some people get paid more than others. But why is this so? How is it worked out? Who says who gets what? These are big questions that employers, unions and governments have spent more than a century arguing about!

Australia has work rules that guarantee all employees some basic rights and spell out important things like the rate of pay, maximum hours, holidays and a fair go.

Most jobs are covered by a set of rules called an industrial award. The award is made by the Industrial Relations Commission (or similar state commissions). The award grants all wage earners in an industry the same minimum conditions of employment.

The award sets the minimum rate of pay for new employees right up to the most experienced and skilled workers. Many awards will have 'junior' rates for employees less than 21 years of age.

Awards also contain other important work rights, including:

Hours of work – including overtime and penalty rates – a full-time job is usually around 38 hours per week. Most awards will include more pay for extra hours worked (overtime rates) or unusual hours such as late nights or weekends or public holidays (penalty rates).

Personal leave – sometimes called sick leave or carer's leave – this is paid leave for times when you are ill or need to care for a family member.

Recreation leave – sometimes called holiday pay or annual leave – this is paid leave to give workers a 'well-earned break'. For full-time employees, the minimum paid leave is four weeks each year.

Parental leave – leave for new mums and dads – having a baby is a big deal and both parents are entitled to special leave to care for children. The mother is entitled to 12 months unpaid leave around the birth (some awards include paid leave). Fathers also get paid time off around the birth and more men are taking leave to look after children.

Awards include other working conditions like work breaks, allowances, training, and ways of dealing with disputes.

FINDING OUT THE CORRECT WAGE FOR YOUR JOB

There are a range of government helplines that can tell you what the correct award wage is. The helpline will need to know your age, the type of work and details of your employer (because the rules are different for companies, partnerships and sole-traders). Before you call, it's a good idea to have this information ready. It's also handy to have your most recent pay slip.

Australia wide

Workplace Authority..... 1300 363 264

State government wage lines

NSW Office of Industrial Relations..... 131 628

QLD WageLine..... 1300 369 945

SA Safe Work SA Help Centre..... 1300 365 255

VIC WageLine..... 1300 363 264

WA WageLine..... 1300 655 266

Tip 1 – Get it in writing first

Ask your employer for a letter with the details of your job, including wages, hours and the relevant award.

Tip 2 – Keep your pay slips

You should receive a pay slip every time you get paid (even if the money is sent directly to your bank account). The pay slip should say the hours of work and the wage rate. If superannuation is paid, it should say how much and the fund name.

Tip 3 – Know the difference between part-time and casual

Part-time employees get all the benefits of full-time employees in proportion to their hours. For example, a part-time employee working half the hours of a full-time employee will get half the leave.

Casual workers can be employed full or part-time but don't get paid leave or the promise of ongoing work. Importantly, casual employers get an extra 20% pay to make up for not having paid leave.

SCAMS & SCANDALS

Unpaid trial work

Two things you should know about unpaid trial work:

1. It rarely leads to a paid job
2. It is illegal and unfair!

Don't let this happen to you:

Jake asked for a job in a cafe. The boss said come in on Saturday and try out in the kitchen. Jake worked hard for six hours and then the boss said he wasn't right for the job. But to Jake's surprise, the boss said he would not get paid because he was only on trial. Jake found out later that the boss often got dishes washed by hopeful job-seekers who never got paid.

1ST JOB FACT

Casual employees get paid 20% more to make up for not getting paid leave

Beyond Awards

There is an industrial award for almost every job - but there are also some agreements that are worked out specifically for an enterprise or individual - but these must not result in employees getting less pay or conditions than the award.

There are two types of non-award employment arrangements:

Enterprise agreements - this is like an 'award' created for just one company. Enterprise agreements are registered with the industrial relations commission and must be at least equal to the award.

Individual contracts - including Australian Workplace Agreements - these are unlikely to apply to a young person in their first job. (The Rudd Federal Government changed the rules to stop new AWAs from March 2008 - although some young people may be employed under AWAs signed before then).