

New Starter Checklist

Everything you need to do when you hire someone in Australia

2026 Edition | For Australian small businesses & not-for-profits

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BEFORE THEY START

Legal & paperwork

■ Prepare a written employment contract

Must reflect NES minimums and any applicable Modern Award. Do not use a generic internet template without checking it.

■ Identify the correct Modern Award (if applicable)

Use Fair Work's Pay and Conditions Tool at calculate.fairwork.gov.au to find the right award and classification.

■ Confirm the correct pay rate

Check award minimum for the classification level. National minimum wage 2025-26: \$24.10/hr. Wage theft is now a criminal offence.

■ Confirm employment type

Full-time, part-time, casual or fixed-term. Each has different obligations — get this right from the start.

■ Set up superannuation

Obtain the employee's super fund details (or use your default fund). From 1 July 2026 super must be paid every payday — not quarterly.

■ Obtain Tax File Number (TFN) declaration

Employee must complete a TFN declaration. Withhold at highest rate until received.

■ Set up payroll

Ensure payroll software is configured for correct tax withholding (STP-enabled), award rates, super and leave accruals.

■ Confirm right to work in Australia

Check the employee has the right to work. Use the Department of Home Affairs Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) for visa holders.

WHS — before day one

■ Conduct a WHS induction plan

Prepare what you will cover — hazards, emergency procedures, reporting, equipment use.

■ Identify any specific hazards for the role

Physical and psychosocial hazards. Prepare relevant safety information.

■ Arrange any required PPE

Ensure personal protective equipment is available and fitted before the first shift.

■ Check if any licences or certificates are required

e.g. food handling, first aid, working with children check, police check, forklift licence.

ON DAY ONE — MANDATORY DOCUMENTS

■ These documents MUST be provided to every new employee on or before their first day. Failure to provide them is a breach of the Fair Work Act. Download current versions from fairwork.gov.au each time.

■ Fair Work Information Statement (FWIS)

Must be given to ALL new employees. Download the current version — do not use a saved copy from a previous year.

■ Casual Employment Information Statement (CEIS)

Required for ALL casual employees in addition to the FWIS. Also re-issue after 3 months, 12 months and then annually.

■ Superannuation Standard Choice Form

Give to all new employees within 28 days of starting. Allows them to nominate their preferred super fund.

■ Tax File Number (TFN) Declaration form

Employee completes and returns to you. Lodge electronically via your STP payroll software or ATO Business Portal.

■ Your employment contract (signed copy)

Ensure the employee signs and you retain a copy. Keep for duration of employment + 7 years.

DAY ONE — INDUCTION

Workplace orientation

- Tour of the workplace — exits, amenities, first aid kit location, emergency assembly point
- Introduction to the team
- Overview of their role, responsibilities and who they report to
- Where to find key policies and procedures
- IT systems access, passwords and acceptable use
- Parking, access and security arrangements

WHS induction — mandatory

- Walk through all relevant workplace hazards
Physical AND psychosocial hazards. Employees must be informed of risks in their work environment.
- Explain how to report a hazard, near miss or incident
Show them the reporting process and any relevant forms or systems.
- Emergency evacuation procedures
Exits, assembly point, fire warden, first aid officer contacts.
- Manual handling, equipment use and any role-specific safety requirements
- Confirm they have received and understand WHS information
Get a signed acknowledgement where possible.

Policies to walk through on day one

- Code of conduct
- Anti-bullying, harassment and discrimination policy
- Grievance and complaints procedure
- Social media and acceptable use policy
- Work from home policy (if applicable)
- Leave and absence procedures

WITHIN THE FIRST WEEK

- Confirm super fund details are correctly set up in payroll
Especially important from 1 July 2026 — super must reach the fund within 7 business days of each payday.
- Set up employee record in your HR/payroll system
Name, address, start date, employment type, pay rate, super details, emergency contact.
- Schedule a check-in at end of first week
A brief conversation — how are they settling in? Any questions? This sets the tone for a supportive workplace.
- Confirm any probation period terms are documented
Probation period should be clearly stated in the employment contract.
- Add employee to workers compensation insurance
Contact your insurer to add the new employee. This is a legal requirement in all states/territories.

ONGOING — FIRST 3-12 MONTHS

- Re-issue CEIS to casual employees at 3 months
Required under the Fair Work Act for all casual employees.
- Schedule regular check-ins / one-on-ones
Good for engagement and also for identifying any early performance or wellbeing concerns.
- Re-issue CEIS at 12 months for casuals
Also consider whether the casual employee may be eligible for conversion — see your casual conversion obligations.

■ Assess probation before the period ends

If the employee is not meeting expectations, address this before probation ends — it is harder after.

■ Ensure all training is recorded and up to date

WHS training records must be kept. Note what was covered and when.

■ **RECORD KEEPING REMINDER:** Keep all employment records for 7 years. This includes payslips, pay records, leave records, super contributions, signed documents and training records. Payslips must be issued within 1 working day of each pay period.

This checklist is a practical guide only — not legal advice. Always verify current requirements with the Fair Work Ombudsman (13 13 94) or a qualified HR professional.

Need help getting your HR right? Compliance Compass provides practical, affordable HR and WHS support for small businesses and not-for-profits across the ACT and surrounds.

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