

Minimum wages

Overview

A minimum wage is an employee's base rate of pay for ordinary hours worked. It is generally dependent on the industrial instrument that applies to their employment. For example, an award or enterprise agreement.

Employees cannot be paid less than their applicable minimum wage, even if they agree to it.

Who determines minimum wages?

Every year, the Fair Work Commission's (the Commission) Expert Panel reviews the minimum wages received by employees in the national workplace relations system.

The review considers:

- written submissions from interested organisations and individuals
- consultations before the Expert Panel
- research commissioned by the Expert Panel.

At the conclusion of this review, a National Minimum Wage Order is made which will apply from the first full pay period on or after 1 July each year.

What is a National Minimum Wage Order?

A National Minimum Wage Order outlines the minimum wage for award and agreement-free employees.

The National Minimum Wage Order must set the following wages for award or agreement-free employees:

- a National Minimum Wage for adults
- a special National Minimum Wage for:
 - trainees, apprentices and junior employees
 - employees to whom training arrangements apply
 - employees with disability
- a casual loading.

For further information about the Annual Wage Review and the National Minimum Wage Order, see sections 285–299 of the Fair Work Act.

What is the current National Minimum Wage?

From 1 July 2024 the National Minimum Wage is \$24.10 per hour or \$915.90 per 38 hour week (before tax).

This is the adult minimum rate for employees with no award or enterprise agreement. Lower rates may apply to juniors, apprentices and trainees. They also may apply to employees with disability if their disability affects their productivity.

Casual employees covered by the National Minimum Wage also get a 25% casual loading.

For award and agreement-free trainees and apprentices, the percentage scale in the Miscellaneous Award is applied to the National Minimum Wage.

Employees covered by an award

Most employees in the national workplace system are covered by an award. Awards contain the minimum wage, as well as other terms and conditions, for employees in particular industries and occupations.

Minimum wages under awards may include:

- pay rates for adults, in some cases, at different rates according to experience and qualifications
- pay rates for juniors, employees with disability, and employees to whom training arrangements apply
- casual loadings
- piece rates.

Award rates are sometimes lower than the National Minimum Wage. For example, introductory rates might apply for a limited time after an employee starts their job. You can't agree to be paid less than the minimum pay rates that apply for your job.

For further information on awards, see our Modern awards fact sheet at fairwork.gov.au/factsheets.

To find out the minimum wage under an award, you can use our Pay Calculator at fairwork.gov.au/pact.

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Fair Work Infoline: **13 13 94**

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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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