

At Work: Public Holidays, Annual Vacations and Breaks

Exercice



Your employer has to obey the law on your working conditions. You have a right to get breaks as well as time off for holidays and when you're sick.

Meal and Coffee Breaks

MEAL BREAKS

Your employer must give you **30 minutes to eat after you work 5 straight hours**.

You won't be paid for meal breaks unless your employer wants you to stay at your place. For example, if your boss asks you to serve customers while you eat because you're the only cashier in the dépanneur or the only receptionist at the office, you'll be paid for your lunch break.

COFFEE BREAKS

Your employer **doesn't have to give you a coffee break**. However, if you do get one, it's included in the hours you work and you should be paid for it.

Public Holidays

Unfortunately, public holidays are not holidays for everyone. For example, you might have to work on New Year's Day, Good Friday or Easter Monday, Journée des Patriotes (formerly Victoria Day), Canada Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving and even Christmas.

Saint-Jean-Baptiste: The rules for Saint-Jean-Baptiste (June 24th) are a little different. Your employer can't make you work unless the business is usually open on holidays (for example, dépanneurs, pharmacies and restaurants). If Saint-Jean-Baptiste falls on a Sunday and the business you work for is usually closed on Sundays, the holiday is pushed ahead to Monday the 25th

Compensation: No matter what the public holiday, your employer has to pay you if you have to work on the holiday. So, you'll either get another day off with pay, or you'll be paid extra (usually a day's pay in addition to your pay for the day you worked).

Annual Vacation

You're entitled to an annual vacation. The number of days you have off depends on how long you've been with the company.

EMPLOYED FOR LESS THAN A YEAR	One day of vacation for each month you've worked, up to a maximum of 2 weeks of vacation
EMPLOYED FOR AT LEAST A YEAR, BUT LESS THAN 3 YEARS	2 weeks of vacation
EMPLOYED FOR AT LEAST 3 YEARS	3 weeks of vacation

Your annual vacation pay is usually 4% of the amount you earned during the preceding year.

Absence for Illness or Accident

Right to Sick Leave Without Losing Your Job: If you can't work because you're sick or had an accident, your employer can't fire you. You can be off work for up to 26 weeks over a 12-month period without losing your job. But your employer doesn't have to pay you during this time.

Notice: If you can't work, you must let your employer know as soon as possible. You must also let your employer know why you can't work. If you'll be away from work for a long time, or if you're repeatedly absent, you might have to give your employer a medical certificate. This is a letter signed by a doctor explaining why you can't work.

Return to Work: When you return to work, you're entitled to get your old job back. Your employer also has to give you the same salary and benefits as you had before. If your employer abolished your job while you were away, you're entitled to compensation for the loss of your job. You are also entitled to compensation if you can't return to your job because your employer laid off the whole group of employees that you were a part of.

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Quiz

Explain why the following situations are illegal.

1. You work for the same employer for 6 months and you want to take 4 days off to go to the cottage with your friends. Your employer tells you that you are not allowed any days off.

2. You work as a receptionist in a law firm. Your boss asks you to stay at your desk and continue to answer the phone during your lunch break, but you're not paid for this time.

3. You work for the company Filing Papers inc. Your employer wants you to work on June 24th.

4. Your employer offers you a 15-minute coffee break during your 4-hour shift. You receive your pay stub and discover that you were only paid for 3 hours and 45 minutes of work.

5. You catch a horrible virus and have to miss work for 10 weeks. When you return, your employer tells you that your services are no longer required. Your employer thanks you and fires you without any compensation.
