

Overview of Massachusetts Workers' Rights

When it comes to workers' rights, many workers are operating in the dark. Learning about your rights on the job, will make you and your co-workers stronger!

Massachusetts Wage Act

You must be paid for every hour you work, even if you quit or are fired. This applies to hours worked, tips, vacation pay, holiday pay and commissions. If you voluntarily leave your job, you must be paid in-full on the next regular pay day. If you are laid off or fired, you must be paid in-full on the day your employment ends. As of January 1, 2020, Massachusetts minimum wage is \$12.75/hour. There are many circumstances in which different wages may be paid. See [links on this state website](#) for more information. Minimum wage will go up in steps to reach \$15 per hour in January 2023.

Meal Breaks

If you work at least six hours a day, you are entitled to a 30-minute break. During your break you must be relieved of all duties and allowed to leave the premises. If you voluntarily elect to give up your meal break, you must be paid for the time worked.

Tips

You may be paid **\$4.95** an hour if you regularly receive tips of more than \$20.00 per month, and only if those tips, when added to the \$4.95 per hour, equal at least \$12.75 per hour. This rate will go up in steps to reach \$6.75 per hour in January 2023. Your tips are yours to keep. *No employer, manager or boss may request or accept any part of your tips.*

Overtime

By law, employers are required to pay time-and-a-half if you work over 40 hours a week. For example, if you usually earn \$12.75 per hour, you would be paid \$19.00 per hour for each hour worked beyond 40 hours.

Sick Time

Employers with eleven (11) or more employees must provide paid sick time up to 40 hours/year. Employers with fewer than 11 employees must provide earned sick time, but it does not need to be paid.

No Discrimination

Massachusetts Civil Rights Law prohibits employers from treating individuals differently than others based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, age, criminal record (inquiries only), disability, sexual orientation, genetics, active military personnel, or past involvement in a discrimination complaint.

Right to Organize

You have a right to organize a union at your workplace or engage in other "concerted action" with coworkers to improve wages and working conditions.