



**More parental leave, with more flexibility for more people**

**More certainty and fairness in employment**

**More power to enforce minimum employment rights**

## More certainty and fairness in employment

### Information for employees

Changes to employment laws from April this year aim to ensure New Zealand workplaces are productive and fair.

### What is changing?

#### Modernising parental leave

› If your expected date of delivery or actual birth is on or after 1 April, or you're going to be taking primary care of a child under six on or after 1 April this year, you may be entitled to up to 18 weeks parental leave payments.

› More working families will be able to apply for these payments because eligibility is being expanded to include seasonal, casual and fixed-term workers who have worked for at least six of the 12 months prior to their baby being born. The leave payments may also be available to primary carers who are not biological or adoptive parents. For example, a grandparent who intends to raise their grandchild in place of the parents.

› The new leave provisions allow employees to go back to work, by agreement with their employer, for occasional activities on a keeping in touch basis without losing their entitlements so long as they do not exceed 40 hours of paid work during their paid parental leave. The changes also allow an employee to take their unpaid leave flexibly, by agreement with their employer.

### More certainty and fairness in employment

› Unfair employment practices that exploit vulnerable workers - such as 'zero hours' where an employee is effectively required to be on call all the time without being paid anything to recognise that demand - undermine New Zealand's reputation as a place to work and do business.

› From April employers should be able to produce a record of the number of hours worked by employees each day in a pay period, and the pay for those hours.

These agreements need to set out terms of work, including hours, so that both you and your employer are clear about your responsibilities to each other. This should be in an easily accessible format on request from an employee or from a labour inspector. Employers will have flexibility as to what form this record takes.

### The new employment standards also prohibit:

- › Employers cancelling a shift without reasonable notice or compensation
- › Employers putting unreasonable restrictions on secondary employment
- › Employers making unreasonable deductions from employee's wages

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## New national minimum wage

› If you're working and aged 16 years or over and not starting-out in work or training or in the first year of an apprenticeship, you'll be legally entitled to earn at least \$15.25 per hour from 1 April 2016. That's an extra 50 cents per hour in your pocket or \$122.00 for an 8 hour day.

› Starting-out and training hourly minimum wages rates increase from \$11.80 to \$12.20 per hour (80% of the adult minimum wage).

› You should see the increase in your pay automatically from April if you currently earn less than the new national minimum wage. So check your pay slip then. If you don't see the difference in April, you may want to speak to your employer or visit [employment.govt.nz](http://employment.govt.nz) for more information.

### **Tougher sanctions for employers who fail to meet employment standards**

The new laws beef up the range of sanctions for employers that fail to meet their obligations in relation to employment standards (such as the minimum wage, holiday pay and record keeping).

#### **New measures include:**

- › Increased penalties for serious breaches
- › Clearer record keeping requirements
- › More ability for employees to seek penalties against employers
- › Changes to the way the Employment Relations Authority will deal with employment standards matters.

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**Need to know more about your employment rights?  
Go to [employment.govt.nz](http://employment.govt.nz)**

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