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Arkansas wage and hour cheat sheet

Minimum wage, overtime, breaks, final pay, and record retention on one sheet. Rates verified November 2026.

Minimum wage

$11.00 per hour since January 1, 2021, set by Initiated Act 5, which voters passed in November 2018 (Ark. Code Ann. § 11-4-210). The Arkansas Minimum Wage Act covers employers with 4 or more employees. Employers covered by the federal Fair Labor Standards Act are also covered by the Arkansas law if they have 4 or more employees, and an employer covered by both laws must pay the higher rate. Tipped employees must be paid a cash wage of at least $2.63 per hour, and tips must bring them up to $11.00 an hour. If they do not, the employer must make up the difference, and the employer must keep accurate tip records. With a full-time student certificate from the Division of Labor, an employer may pay a full-time student at an Arkansas school at least 85 percent of the minimum wage ($9.35), for no more than 20 hours a week while school is in session and 40 hours a week when it is not (11 CAR § 11-301). The rate is not indexed, and no change is scheduled for January 1, 2027.

Overtime

1.5x the regular rate for non-exempt employees for all hours actually worked over 40 in a workweek (Ark. Code Ann. § 11-4-211). The Arkansas Division of Labor notes that paid hours not actually worked, such as holidays or sick days, do not count as hours worked for state or federal overtime. Agricultural employees are exempt from the state overtime rule, and some employers, such as police, fire departments, hospitals, and residential care facilities, may have special overtime provisions. Only public agencies may give compensatory time off instead of overtime pay.

Daily overtime

None. Arkansas overtime is based on hours actually worked over 40 in a workweek. The Arkansas Division of Labor states that an employee may work more than 8 hours in a day, or more than a regularly scheduled shift, and still not exceed 40 hours of actual work in the workweek.

Meal break

No state meal-break requirement for adult employees. The Arkansas Department of Labor and Licensing states that neither state nor federal wage and hour law requires an employer to provide a break or a meal period. If one is given, a bona fide meal period (typically 30 minutes or more) generally need not be paid, as long as the employee is completely relieved of duty.

Rest break

No state rest-break requirement for adult employees. If the employer gives short rest periods, usually 20 minutes or less, state and federal law require that the time be counted as hours worked and paid. State law does require rest breaks for children under 16 employed in the entertainment industry.

Final paycheck

Discharged: by the next regular payday (Ark. Code Ann. § 11-4-405). The Arkansas Department of Labor and Licensing states that if a company or corporation terminates an employee, the wages are due by the next regular payday, and if the employer fails to pay within 7 days of the next regular payday, the employer owes the employee double the wages due. The department's guidance does not state a separate deadline for an employee who quits. Final-pay disputes of

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Arkansas wage and hour cheat sheet (continued)

$2,000 or less can be filed as a wage claim with the Division of Labor by workers earning $50,000 a year or less.

How long to keep time records

Federal law requires keeping time cards 2 years and payroll records 3 years, and some states go longer. Keep the records where you can produce them; a wage claim is decided on whoever has the better records.

Rates verified November 2026. The $11.00 rate took effect January 1, 2021, the last step of the 2018 voter-approved increase. Arkansas does not index its minimum wage, and the Department of Labor and Licensing lists no scheduled change, so the rate stays at $11.00 unless the law is amended. This is general information, not legal or payroll advice. Check the Arkansas labor department for the current rules, and talk to a professional for your situation.

Primary source: https://labor.arkansas.gov/labor/labor-standards/minimum-wage-and-overtime/. Full list of sources: getclox.com/blog/arkansas-time-tracking.