



Overtime cheat sheet

The weekly rule, a worked example, and the state exception that catches people out.

The federal rule

Overtime is owed for hours worked past 40 in a workweek, paid at one and a half times the regular rate. The workweek is a fixed, recurring 168 hours. The pay period does not change this: overtime is always computed per week, even when you pay every two weeks.

A worked example

At \$30 an hour and a 46-hour week: 40 regular hours pay \$1,200. Six overtime hours pay \$45 each, which is \$270. The week totals \$1,470.

Across a two-week pay period made of a 50-hour week and a 38-hour week, the total is 88 hours, but there are still 10 overtime hours, because week one crossed 40 on its own.

Some states add daily overtime

California is the common example: overtime past 8 hours in a day, double time past 12, and rules for a seventh consecutive day, layered on top of the weekly rule. A long Monday can owe overtime there even in a week that never reaches 40 hours. Check your own state before relying on the weekly rule alone.

This is general information, not legal advice.