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Tennessee wage and hour cheat sheet

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

Minimum wage

$7.25 per hour (federal FLSA rate). Tennessee has no state minimum wage law, so employers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act must pay the federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour. Tennessee also has no state law on tips or tipped employees, so the federal rule applies: a cash wage of $2.13 per hour with a tip credit of up to $5.12, as long as tips bring total pay to at least $7.25, for employees who receive more than $30 a month in tips.

Overtime

1.5x the regular rate for hours over 40 in a workweek under the federal FLSA. Tennessee has no state law regulating overtime pay. Overtime is governed and enforced federally by the US DOL Wage and Hour Division.

Daily overtime

None. Tennessee has no state overtime law and no state law regulating scheduling, so only the federal weekly standard applies (over 40 hours in a workweek). Working more than 8 hours in a day does not by itself trigger overtime.

Meal break

30 minutes for employees scheduled to work 6 consecutive hours. The meal or rest period may be unpaid (Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-2-103(h)). The break may not be scheduled during or before the first hour of scheduled work. The requirement does not apply in workplaces that, by the nature of the business, give ample opportunity to rest or take an appropriate break. The state's examples are food and beverage workers and security guards. Failing to provide the 30-minute period is a violation of state law.

Rest break

No additional rest-break requirement. Beyond the 30-minute meal or rest period for employees scheduled 6 consecutive hours, Tennessee has no state requirement for additional breaks.

Final paycheck

By the next regular payday or 21 days after separation, whichever is later, whether the employee quits or is discharged. That rule is Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-2-103(g), and the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development states there is no exemption under the law. Tennessee does not require payout of accrued unused vacation or other fringe benefits unless the employer's policy or a labor agreement requires it.

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. Tennessee has no state minimum wage, overtime, or tip law, so the federal $7.25 (unchanged since July 24, 2009) and federal FLSA overtime apply, and no state change is scheduled because there is no state rate. Separately, Tennessee requires private employers with 5 or more employees to set regular paydays and to pay at least once a month (Tenn. Code Ann. § 50-2-103(a)(1)). This is general information, not legal or payroll advice. Check the Tennessee labor department for the current rules, and talk to a professional for your situation.

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Tennessee wage and hour cheat sheet (continued)

Primary source: https://www.tn.gov/workforce/employees/labor-laws/labor-laws-redirect/wages-breaks.html. Full list of sources: getclox.com/blog/tennessee-time-tracking.