



## Washington wage and hour cheat sheet

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

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### Minimum wage

\$17.13/hr in effect on Jan 1, 2026, up 2.8 percent from \$16.66 in 2025. Washington sets the highest statewide minimum wage in the country and adjusts it annually for inflation. There is no tip credit; tips and service charges cannot be counted toward the minimum wage, so tipped employees must be paid the full \$17.13. Workers ages 14 and 15 may be paid 85 percent of the state minimum, which is \$14.56/hr in 2026. Several localities require more: Seattle is \$21.30/hr, Tukwila is \$21.65/hr for larger employers, Burien is \$21.63/hr for the largest employers and \$20.63/hr for mid-size employers, SeaTac is \$20.74/hr for covered hospitality and transportation workers, Renton is \$21.57/hr for covered employers (the mid-size rate rose to match the large-employer rate on July 1, 2026; the smallest employers follow the state rate), Everett and unincorporated King County also exceed the state rate, and Bellingham is \$19.13/hr. Employers in areas without a local ordinance follow the \$17.13 state rate.

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### Overtime

1.5x the regular rate after 40 hours in a workweek. Washington follows the weekly overtime standard under RCW 49.46.130, consistent with the federal FLSA. There is no tip credit, so overtime is calculated on the full regular rate.

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### Daily overtime

None. Washington has no daily overtime and no general double-time requirement; overtime for most employees is weekly (over 40 hours in a 7-day workweek) only. Narrow exceptions exist for specific industries such as certain agricultural piece-rate and public-works prevailing-wage settings, but these do not apply to ordinary hourly employees.

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### Meal break

Nonexempt employees must receive a meal period of at least 30 minutes when working more than 5 hours in a shift, beginning no less than 2 hours and no more than 5 hours from the start of the shift. The meal period is unpaid only if the employee is fully relieved of all duties; if the employee is required to remain on duty or is interrupted, the meal period must be paid. An additional 30-minute meal period is required for shifts of 3 or more hours beyond a regular workday. Minors have more protective meal and rest rules.

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### Rest break

Nonexempt employees must receive a paid rest period of at least 10 minutes for every 4 hours worked, scheduled as near as possible to the midpoint of each 4-hour segment. Employees cannot be required to work more than 3 hours without a rest period. Denied breaks can entitle the employee to additional pay, and employers may face civil penalties.

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### Final paycheck

Final wages are due on the next regularly scheduled payday after employment ends, under RCW 49.48.010, with no distinction between employees who quit and those who are discharged. Washington has no statute requiring immediate payment on the last day. Willful failure to pay can expose an employer to double damages and attorney fees under RCW 49.52.070.



## Washington wage and hour cheat sheet (continued)

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### 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 August 2026. Washington adjusts its minimum wage for inflation each year, so the \$17.13 rate will change on January 1, 2027. Seattle, Tukwila, Burien, SeaTac, Renton, Everett, unincorporated King County, and Bellingham set higher local minimums, some tiered by employer size, so check the applicable city ordinance for the exact figure. This is general information, not legal or payroll advice. Check the Washington labor department for the current rules, and talk to a professional for your situation.

Primary source: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/workers-rights/wages/minimum-wage/>. Full list of sources: [getclox.com/blog/washington-time-tracking](https://getclox.com/blog/washington-time-tracking).