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Wisconsin 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 since July 24, 2009, for adults and minors alike. Tipped employees may be paid a cash wage of $2.33 per hour, and the employer must make up the difference if tips plus that wage do not average at least $7.25 per hour over the pay period. Employers may pay an opportunity wage of $5.90 per hour to workers under 20 during their first 90 consecutive calendar days of employment. Workers move to $7.25 after 90 days or at age 20, whichever comes first. A tipped opportunity employee may be paid a cash wage of $2.13 per hour. Separate rates apply to golf caddies ($5.90 for 9 holes, $10.50 for 18 holes) and to camp counselors (weekly rates of $350, or $265 with board, or $210 with board and lodging). The legal basis is Wis. Stat. chapter 104 and Wis. Admin. Code DWD 272.

Overtime

1.5x the regular rate for all hours worked over 40 in a workweek, regardless of age (Wis. Stat. §§ 103.01 to 103.03 and Wis. Admin. Code DWD 274). A week is a calendar week or a regular recurring period of 168 hours made up of seven consecutive 24-hour periods. Exemptions include agricultural employees, certain administrative, executive, and professional employees, certain outside sales and commissioned employees, taxicab drivers, certain motor carrier employees covered by federal transportation rules, salespeople, parts staff, and mechanics at motor vehicle dealers, and movie theater employees.

Daily overtime

None in general. Overtime is owed only after 40 hours in a workweek, not for work on any particular day. The Department of Workforce Development notes one exception: some public works construction projects require daily overtime and overtime on certain holidays.

Meal break

Not required for adults 18 and older. The Department of Workforce Development encourages, but does not require, meal periods of at least 30 minutes at a time reasonably close to the usual meal period. Minors under 18 must receive a 30-minute duty-free meal period for every six consecutive hours of work. Meal periods must be paid if the employee is not given at least 30 consecutive minutes free from work or is not free to leave the employer's premises (Wis. Admin. Code DWD 274.02). US DOL also lists a required 30-minute meal period after 6 hours for migrant workers.

Rest break

No rest breaks are required for adults. If an employer gives rest periods or breaks shorter than 30 consecutive minutes, they count as work time and must be paid (Wis. Admin. Code DWD 274.02). US DOL does not list Wisconsin among the states that require paid rest periods.

Final paycheck

On the employer's regular pay schedule, whether the employee quits or is discharged. That rule comes from Wisconsin's Wage Payment and Collection Law, Wis. Stat. chapter 109. Wisconsin also requires most employers to pay all wages earned at least monthly, with no more than 31 days between pay periods.

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Wisconsin wage and hour cheat sheet (continued)

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. Wisconsin's minimum wage has been $7.25 since July 24, 2009, and the Department of Workforce Development's minimum wage page lists no scheduled increase. This is general information, not legal or payroll advice. Check the Wisconsin labor department for the current rules, and talk to a professional for your situation.

Primary source: https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/er/laborstandards/minimumwage.htm. Full list of sources: getclox.com/blog/wisconsin-time-tracking.