What You Should Know About Your Rights at Work in the United States



You have rights at work. Learn the laws that protect you and how to identify abuse or exploitation in the workplace.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

- You must be paid **at least minimum wage** in the state where you work. In many states, the minimum wage is higher than the federal minimum wage ($7.25 per hour).
- If you work more than 40 hours a week, your employer must pay you **overtime**. This means they must pay you one and a half times your regular pay rate for each hour you work over 40 hours a week.
- Federal laws also require your employer to ensure you are working in a **safe and healthy** environment.
- **Protections for youth**: Youth under the age of 18 are not allowed to do jobs considered hazardous, such as mining, using heavy machinery, working on roofs, or operating vehicles. There are also laws that limit the number of hours youth are allowed to work.

OBTAINING A WORK PERMIT



- For refugee and other ORR-eligible youth in the United States, it's important to understand that **you can only work if you have legal work authorization**. If you have not yet received your employment authorization, you cannot legally work until you receive one.
- It's best to **speak with a qualified immigration attorney** to learn more about your options for obtaining work authorization in the United States.
- Working without legal authorization can carry **serious risks**:
  - It can cause future problems with immigration authorities or with your legal case.
  - Working without legal authorization can put you at higher risk of being exploited, mistreated, or taken advantage of by employers.

TEN WARNING SIGNS OF LABOR EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE



1. If your employer is not paying you the minimum wage in your state
2. If you work more than 40 hours a week and your employer is not paying you overtime
3. If your employer does not allow breaks for meals or the bathroom during the workday
4. If your employer does not allow you to take a day off when you are sick
5. If your employer threatens that you will lose your job if you take a day off;
6. If your employer has your identity documents in their possession (such as your passport, work permit, and social security card) and does not allow you to access them;
7. If your employer is taking money from your salary to pay for rent or other costs, or to repay a debt;
8. If your employer is threatening to call the police or immigration on you for working without legal authorization;
9. If your employer is harming or threatening to harm you or your family if you don't work;
10. If you feel forced to work out of fear of harm.



If you find yourself in a similar situation, talk with a trusted adult, your caseworker, or a qualified attorney. You can call the following number for help and information about resources, your rights and benefits, and request access to available resources:

National Human Trafficking Hotline

1-888-373-7888

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