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Working Time Regulations 1998

The Working Time Regulations came into force on 1st October 1998. The regulations aim to outline minimum daily and weekly rest periods, paid leave and the limits set for total and average time that employees may be expected to work in one week. Variations are set for adult workers and young persons. The regulations also lay down requirements for provision of pre-employment health and capacities assessments for adolescent workers and pre-employment and on-going health assessments for adult night workers.

Basics of the Regulations:

1. A minimum daily rest period of 11 hours in any 24 hour period (young workers are entitled to 12 hours).
2. In work rest breaks of 20 minutes where the working days are greater than 6 hours (young workers are entitled to 30 minutes break).
3. A full 24 hours break in every seven day period (a full 48 hours break for young workers).
4. A maximum permitted working hours per week of 48 hours, averaged over 17 weeks (this may be altered if mutual documented agreement by employee and employer, documents to be kept for 2 years).
5. A maximum permitted night working hours of eight hours in 24 hours (nights classified as between 11.00 pm and 6.00 am).
6. An entitlement to 4 weeks fully paid annual leave per annum.
7. An entitlement for young workers proposing to commence night work to be pre-employment checked by a health and capacities assessment, checking physical and psychological ability to safely work at nights, and regular checks thereafter.
8. An entitlement for adult night workers to a regular health assessment.

A night worker is construed by the above Regulation to be any person who works at least three hours of their normal working hours in the time period classified, i.e. 11.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. A young worker is classified as anyone under the age of 18.