



VAL HOYLE
Labor Commissioner

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Oregon law protects rest and meal breaks at work

In the last six weeks, the Bureau of Labor and Industries has received a significant increase in inquiries and complaints from workers in the healthcare industry reporting they are not being allowed to take their rest and meal breaks. Since the beginning of the pandemic, nearly 20% of the rest and meal break complaints the Bureau of Labor and Industries has received are from workers in the healthcare industry. That's a significant increase in that industry from 2019.

"Many healthcare workers and others are working overtime because of the pandemic," says Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle. "Oregon law protects rest and meal breaks during work shifts. I want to make sure workers know that they have the right to take breaks at work."

Oregon law protects specific rest breaks and time for meals during work shifts. Employers are required to allow these breaks and to make sure workers take this time free from work responsibilities. Employers face potential penalties for violations of meal and rest break laws.

"The law protects rest breaks and meal breaks during work to make sure we can take care of our basic needs and be ready to perform our best," says Hoyle. "During this intense pandemic surge, taking your protected breaks is an important way to take care of yourself so you can take care of others – and a right that Oregon workers have."

For each 8 hour work shift, non-exempt workers get two 10 minute paid rest breaks and one 30 minute unpaid meal break. For longer or shorter work shifts, please refer to this chart or [BOLI's website](#).

Reasonable breaks as needed to express milk are also protected until the child reaches 18 months of age.

These are the minimum requirements. Employers can give more or longer breaks. Employers are required to display these requirements in a clear location in all worksites.

Shift Length	Rest Breaks	Meal Breaks
2 hrs or less	0	0
2 hrs 1 min - 5 hrs 59 min	1	0
6 hrs	1	1
6 hrs 1 min - 10 hrs	2	1
10 hrs 1 min - 13 hrs 59 min	3	1
14 hrs	3	2
14 hrs 1 min - 18 hrs	4	2

If you or someone you know is not receiving rest or meal breaks at work, you can call BOLI for help at 971-673-0761, email help@boli.state.or.us or file a complaint online. Employers face potential penalties for violations of meal and rest break laws. Workers could receive back pay or other compensation for violations they experience.

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