

Meal and Rest Breaks in California

(Based on IWC Wage Order, Section 11)



YOUR LIFE
YOUR CARE
YOUR PEOPLE

Who This Applies To

This information applies to participants in California's Self-Determination Program (SDP) who employ workers, with PPL as the Financial Management Services (FMS) provider.

Meal Break Rules

- If workers work more than 5 hours in a day → they must receive a 30-minute unpaid meal break, unless they work no more than 6 hours in a day and agree in writing to skip the meal break.
- The meal break must start before the workers complete 5 hours of work. For example, if a worker starts at 8:00 a.m., the worker's meal break should begin no later than 12:59 p.m.
- If workers work more than 10 hours in a day → they must receive a second 30-minute unpaid meal break, unless they work no more than 12 hours in a day, agree in writing to skip the second meal break, and did not skip the first meal break.

On-Duty Meal Breaks (Special Case)

Sometimes caregiving or other duties make it hard to stop working for a 30-minute meal break. In that case:

- The meal break can be on-duty (worker stays on the job).
- It must be paid.
- You and your worker must both sign a written agreement.
- The worker can cancel that agreement at any time in writing.

Rest Break Rules

- If workers work more than 3.5 hours in a day → they must receive a 10-minute paid rest break for each 4-hour period worked or more than half of a 4-hour period.
- The rest break should occur in the middle of each 4-hour period of work, or close to the middle.

Consequences

- If a worker is not provided any or all required meal breaks, the worker is owed 1 hour's wages at the worker's regular rate of pay.
- If a worker is not provided any or all required rest breaks in a day, the worker is owed 1 hour's wages at the worker's regular rate of pay.

Important Reminders

- As the employer, you are responsible for making sure workers get their required breaks.
 - Workers cannot be discouraged from taking breaks.
 - Keep any written agreements for on-duty meal breaks in your records.
- **Disclaimer:** This is a summary for general informational purposes only. Participants should consult the official **California IWC Wage Order, Section 11** or seek legal advice for detailed guidance. **Link:** <https://www.dir.ca.gov/IWC/IWCArticle15.pdf>