

Working conditions

The term working conditions includes all factors involving an employee during the performance of his work. The most important working conditions are:

- Working hours
- Schedule of working hours
- Work breaks
- Rest period
- Standby
- Overtime
- Night-work

Special working conditions of some categories of employees

- Working conditions of women (female employees)
- Working condition of juvenile employees
- Working conditions of persons with disabilities

1. Working Hours

Working hours mean:

- a) A period of time in which an employee is obliged to perform work for his employer and
- b) A period of time for which an employee is ready to perform work for his employer at the workplace according to his employer's instructions. This corresponds with EC Directive no. 2003/88 concerning certain aspects of organisation of working time.

In the Czech Republic the normal weekly working hours may not be longer than 40 hours per week.

For some categories of employees the normal working hours may not exceed 37.5 hours per week (employees who work underground, on extraction of coal, or on construction of mineworks, etc. and employees who are on three-shift pattern of work or on continuous shift pattern of work).

For employees who work on two-shift pattern of work, the normal weekly hours shall be 38.75.

The relevant collective agreement or employer's internal regulations may stipulate the reduction of normal weekly working hours without reduction of wage. This is not possible when the employer provides to his employees salary for their work (employers under the section 109 sub 3).

Part-time work

Part time work may be agreed in an employment contract or in some other agreement. When part-time work has been agreed, the employee concerned is entitled to a wage or salary corresponding to his working hours.

The employer is obliged to comply with the request to work part-time of:

- A female employee taking care of a child who is younger than 15 years, or
- A pregnant employee, or
- An employee (man or woman) who proves that he or she takes care of largely or fully bedridden person (old person or disabled person).

2. The Schedule of Working Hours

The employer shall schedule the working hours and determine the beginning and the end of shifts. The employer must be at his workplace before the start of his shift and leave the work after the end of his shift.

In assigning employees to shifts, the employer shall also take into consideration the needs of female employee or male employee taking care of children.

There can be even or uneven schedule of working hours and flexible schedule of working hours. The Czech Labour Code supposes also the account of working hours. This may be stipulated only in relevant collective agreement, or internal regulations. Each employee concerned with the account of working hours must agree with it.

3. Work Breaks

a) The break for food and rest

The employer must give to his employee the break for food and rest if the employee has been continuously working for six hours. It is possible to give the break earlier than after six hours of work but not later. The minimum length of the break for food and rest is 30 minutes. It is possible to provide the break for longer period of time. It can be divided into two or more parts but each part must last at least 15 minutes.

The break for food and rest shall not be provided at the beginning and the end of the working hours.

The break is not included into the working hours.

b) Safety breaks

Safety breaks are provided according to statutory provisions (drivers, employees working with screen...).

There are safety reasons for such breaks.

The breaks are included into the working hours.

4. Rest period

Rest period means any period outside the working hours

The Czech Labour Code contains the provisions about the rest periods between two shifts (12 consecutive hours between two shifts). The rest period may be reduced to a minimum period of 8 hours provided that the subsequent rest period is longer. This is possible for example in the agriculture, in health care establishments, social care establishments and so on, and in the case of natural disasters or when working on urgent repairs.

Rest days – Saturday, Sunday and public holidays. The employer may exceptionally order the performance of work. When an employer performs work during rest day he is entitled to wage and to a premium to his wage.

Continuous rest period for week - 35 hours per week.

5. Standby

Standby means a period during which an employee is ready to perform a work (type of work agreed in his employment contract). In the event of urgent need the employee must perform this work in addition to his schedule of shifts. The employee is ready to perform work in some other place than the place of work agreed in his employment contract.

The employee must agree with his standby.

Employee who doesn't perform work during his standby is entitled to remuneration in the amount of at least 10 % of employee's average wage.

Employee who performs work during his standby is entitled to his wage for the time he was working and to remuneration for the rest of his standby.

6. Overtime

Means a work performed in a period of time which exceeds normal weekly hours

The limit is 416 per year:

- a) On the employer's order up to 150 hours per year. But in one week the overtime work must not exceed 8 hours.
- b) With the consent of an employee if employer requests overtime work that exceeds 150 hours per year.

The employer may not employ pregnant employee and female, or male employee, who is taking care of a child younger than one year, on overtime.

Night work

Night work is work performed during the night-time. (10 p.m. to 6 a.m.).

Working conditions of some categories of employees

Some categories of employees are entitled to special protection in labour relations and to special working conditions. It is provided in the Charter of fundamental rights and freedoms. This provision is elaborated in Labour Code and Act on Employment. The protected categories are:

- Women
- Juvenile employees
- Persons with disabilities

1. Working conditions for women (female employees)

Under section 238 of the Czech Labour Code women may not be employed underground on the extraction of minerals or driving of tunnels and galleries. They only may:

- Work in managerial position not involving manual work,
- Work in health care and social services,
- Perform such work as part of practical experience when doing their studies,
- Perform other than manual work and their work must be occasionally performed underground e.g. their work is connected with the supervision or inspection or such work is connected with their studies.

Women may not be employed by works which endanger their motherhood. The types of works and workplaces that are prohibited to pregnant women, breastfeeding or who are mothers until the ninth month after the childbirth are laid down in the Ministry of Health Decree.

Such women may not be employed to carry out these types of work for which they are not fit under the relevant medical certificate.

2. Working condition for juvenile employees

A juvenile employee means an employee who is under the age of 18. But he or she must be over the age of 15 and not attend the compulsory school attention.

The normal working hours of juvenile employee is 30 hours per week.

The length of his shift may not exceed six hour a day.

A juvenile employee must always be given the break for food and rest after 4.5 hours of continuous work. His break may not be divided in more parts.

A juvenile employee is entitled to continuous rest period for week 48 hours per week.

3. Working condition for persons with disabilities

The persons with disabilities are protected. The Act no. 435/2004 Coll. on Employment lays down special rules for employment of such employees.