

# HEALTHCARE REST BREAKS & MEAL PERIODS: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND YOUR CONTRACT

Shift Length	Rest Breaks	Meal Period
4 to 5 hour	*10 min x 1	0
8-hour shift	*10 min x 2	30 min x1
10-hour shift	*10 min x 2	30 min x1
12-hour shift	*10 min x 3	30 min x2
16-hour shift	*10 min x 4	30 min x2

\*10 minutes is the WA State minimum. If your contract bargaining agreement (CBA) states 15 minutes, you should receive 15-minute rest breaks. You must receive a paid rest break for every four (4) hours worked. You cannot waive your right to a rest break.

## Meal Period: Your right to a meal period

- **A meal period cannot be substituted for breaks:** Any employee who works more than four (4) hours gets their breaks as outlined above, and any scheduled meal period.
- **You are entitled to a 30-minute uninterrupted meal period when working more than five hours.** The first meal period must be between the second and fifth hour worked. **If you work 11 hours or more** during the day, you must receive a second meal period no later than five (5) hours after the end of your first meal period.
- **Interrupted Mealtime:** If you are required to stay on duty during a meal break you are still entitled to 30 total minutes of mealtime, excluding interruptions, plus 30 minutes of pay. Time spent performing the work task is not considered part of the meal period. The entire meal period must be paid no matter the number of interruptions. For example, if you received a 30-minute meal break but had to answer your work phone throughout then you should be paid 30 minutes for your meal period and receive a total of 30 minutes (non-consecutive) mealtime.
- **Late Mealtime:** If you are not given time to have a 30-minute mealtime, you must be paid for your time worked plus 30 minutes. Paying employees 30 minutes for the meal period does not absolve the employer's responsibility to give you a late 30-minute unpaid mealtime when practicable.

*The above is a general guideline to meal periods and rest breaks. For more in-depth information please contact your union representative.*

Relevant Laws:

WAC 296-126-092 <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=296-126-092>

RCW 49.12.480 <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=49.12.480>

