



Meal Periods and Rest Breaks

For: NonAcademic Staff

Subject: Wages and Salaries

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Meal Periods

All staff, including temporary and casual staff, must take appropriate unpaid meal periods as described below. Meal periods cannot be accumulated to provide for a prolonged time-off period. Staff members who believe they are not being allowed to take meal periods should contact their local Human Resources Representative.

When a nonexempt employee works more than six hours which includes the period of 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., the department must provide and the employee must take at least 30 minutes for the meal period. Such 30-minute meal period must be taken and completed within the 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. timeframe.

If a nonexempt employee is scheduled to work a shift which begins before 11:00 a.m. and continues later than 7 p.m., the employee must take and complete an additional meal period of at least 20 minutes between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

When a nonexempt employee is scheduled to work a shift of more than 6 hours which begins between 1 p.m. and 6 a.m., the employee must take a meal period of at least 30 minutes at a time approximately mid-way between the beginning and the end of the shift.

If a particular work schedule is not covered in the above examples, then whenever a staff member works more than 6 hours, a minimum 30 minute meal period must be taken approximately mid-way between the start and end of that shift.

Rest Breaks

While not required by law, allowing rest breaks is within the discretion of each department which will establish its own practices within guidelines listed below:

A rest break of less than 20 minutes is considered time worked

Rest break time may not be added to the lunch hour or other off-duty time.

Rest break time cannot be accumulated to provide for a prolonged time-off period.

Scheduling of rest breaks for individuals should not interfere with the department's normal operation.

Rest breaks should not occur at the beginning or conclusion of the work day.

Additional Resources

For further guidance, please see "[Meal Periods and Rest Breaks- Frequently Asked Questions.](#)"

NOTE:

For Cornell University policy information, visit the [University Policy Office.](#)