

Workplace Laws

Massachusetts Meal Break Law M.G.L. ch.149 (1887 and amended)

- Requires a 30-min. unpaid meal break on any shift that lasts more than 6 hours.
[Mass. Law does not require employers to provide rest breaks]
- State Law

Massachusetts Payments of Wages Law (1879)

- Wages, salaries, and commissions of people working five or six days a week must be paid within six days of the close of the pay period in which the money is earned
- Wages must be paid weekly or biweekly (except that certain salaried employees may be paid semimonthly or monthly)

Massachusetts Workers Compensation Act Chapter 152 (1911)

- Provides cash benefits, medical coverage and re-training expenses for work related injuries
- State Law

Davis-Bacon Act (1931)

- Requires workers on federal and state construction contracts worth \$2,000 or more be paid the "prevailing wage", i.e. wages equal to rates established by union bargaining agreements in that geographic area. The Massachusetts prevailing wage laws require that employees on public works projects be paid prevailing wage.

New Deal Social Security Act (1935)

- Provides Unemployment Insurance up to 30 wks for workers who have lost a job through no fault of their own
- Federal Law
- Covers documented immigrants only

National Labor Relations Act (1935)

- Gives workers the right to organize to improve wages and working conditions, including the right to organize a union & bargain collectively with the employer
- Federal Law
- Covers Private Sector only

Fair Labor Standards Act (1938)

- Regulates minimum wage; guarantees right for most workers to be paid 1½ times normal rate for hours worked over 40 hr/week; sets standards for the hours and type of employment for workers under 18.
- Federal Law

Massachusetts Fair Employment Practices Act Chapter 151B (1946)

- Forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin and ancestry; later amended to ban discrimination on basis of age, sex, handicap, sexual harassment, and sexual orientation.
- State Law

Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
- Federal Law

Massachusetts Employment & Training Law (1970)

- Provides up to 30 weeks Unemployment Insurance for workers who have lost a job through no fault of their own
- State Law
- Covers documented immigrants only

Minimum Fair Wage Law Chapter 151 (1970)

- Regulates minimum wage and guarantees right for most workers to be paid 1 ½ normal rate for hours worked over 40 hr/week
- State Law

Occupational Safety & Health Act (1970)

- Provides Safety and Health Protections and workplace free from recognized hazards
- Federal Law
- Covers Private sector only

Massachusetts Public Employee Collective Bargaining Law Chapter 150E (1973)

- Gives public employees the right to organize to improve wages and working conditions, including the right to organize a union & bargain collectively with the employer
- State Law
- Covers Public sector only

Americans with Disabilities Act (1992)

- Forbids Discrimination due to disability
- Federal Law

Family & Medical Leave Act (1993)

- Provides Unpaid leave due to disability of the worker, to care for sick family member or for the birth or adoption of a child.
- Federal Law

Mass. Public Employee Whistleblower Protection Act Chapter 149, Section 185 (1993)

- Protects public employees from retaliation for reporting misconduct or refusing to engage in illegal activity. A similar law passed in 1999 covers health care workers
- State Law
- Covers state & municipal employees & health care workers only