



WA award summary

Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award

1 July 2026

About this award summary

This document is a summary of the state Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award. WA awards are legal documents that outline the pay rates, allowances, working hours, and leave entitlements for employees in a particular industry or type of work.

Complying with the provisions of a WA award is compulsory and all employers who are covered by this WA award must provide employees with the pay rates and employment entitlements in the WA award, as outlined in this award summary and in the award as a minimum. Potential penalties for employers who do not meet WA award requirements are detailed on page 2.

This is a summary only and does not include all obligations required by the award. It is important to also refer to the full Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award that is available on the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC) website www.wairc.wa.gov.au. Provisions of other employment legislation also apply to employees and have been included in this WA award summary where appropriate. You should refer to the *Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993* (MCE Act), the *Long Service Leave Act 1958* (LSL Act), and the *Industrial Relations Act 1979* (IR Act) for full details. Some provisions in the national *Fair Work Act 2009* (FW Act) relating to leave and termination of employment also apply to state system employees covered by this award and relevant information has been included in this summary.

This document is formatted for viewing on the department's website and contains web links to other relevant information. If using a printed copy in which links are not visible, all additional information can be found at www.lgirs.wa.gov.au/wageline or by calling Wageline on 1300 655 266.

Disclaimer

The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety has prepared this WA award summary to provide information on pay rates and major award provisions. It is not designed to be comprehensive or to provide legal advice. The department does not accept liability for any claim which may arise from any person acting on, or refraining from acting on, this information.

Three Step Check - to make sure this WA award summary is relevant to you

Step 1 Is the business in the state system	This WA award summary applies to businesses in the state industrial relations system (state system). The state system covers businesses (and their employees) that operate as: ✓ sole traders ✓ unincorporated partnerships ✓ unincorporated trust arrangements ✓ incorporated associations and other not-for-profit organisations that are not trading or financial corporations This summary does not apply to businesses in the national fair work system (national system) which operate as: ✗ Pty Ltd businesses ✗ incorporated partnerships or incorporated trusts ✗ incorporated associations and other not-for-profit organisations that are trading or financial corporations For more information visit Which system of employment law applies. If the business or organisation is in the national system visit the Fair Work Ombudsman website www.fairwork.gov.au.
Step 2 Is the business covered by the Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award	The Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award applies to businesses in the state system which is undertaking food manufacturing or processing. An extensive list of types of businesses covered is available in clause 3 - Scope, in the award on the WAIRC website.
Step 3 Is the employee's job covered by the Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award	The Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award sets pay rates, working hours and other employment arrangements for employees working in food manufacturing businesses covered by the award.

Industrial inspectors at the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety have powers under the IR Act to investigate employee complaints about underpayments of pay rates and leave entitlements under this WA award and state employment laws. Industrial inspectors also undertake regular proactive compliance audits in particular industries to determine if employers are paying correct wages and keeping correct employment records.

The penalty for not complying with a provision of a WA award or not complying with a requirement relating to employment records is up to \$18,000 for individuals and \$93,000 for bodies corporate. Higher penalties apply for serious contraventions of up to \$180,000 for individuals and \$930,000 for bodies corporate. An industrial inspector is also able to give a person a civil infringement notice, similar to an 'on-the-spot fine', for not complying with employment record-related requirements. Record keeping requirements are outlined in 'Employment records' in this summary.

Employees who believe that they have been underpaid wages or leave entitlements under state employment laws, can follow the [Steps to making an underpayment complaint](#).

Stay informed when pay rates change - subscribe to [Wageline News](#) or follow [Wageline on social media](#).

Rates of pay

All rates of pay are gross rates (before tax). The tables below provide the rates that apply from the beginning of the first full pay period that starts on or after **1 July 2026**.

Some pay rates in this award are below the applicable State Minimum Wage. The rates in this summary reflect the legal minimum rate payable to employees.

For classification definitions of job roles at each level, see the 'Classifications' publication on the [Food Industry \(Food Manufacturing or Processing\) Award summary](#) page.

Adult rates of pay

Classification	Weekly	Hourly	Casual (includes 25% casual loading)
Level 1	\$998.30	\$26.27	\$32.84
Level 1A	\$998.30	\$26.27	\$32.84
Level 2	\$998.30	\$26.27	\$32.84
Level 3	\$1,028.50	\$27.07	\$33.84
Level 4	\$1,056.80	\$27.81	\$34.76
Level 5	\$1,105.20	\$29.08	\$36.35

When an employee performs duties that carry a higher rate of pay for more than half a day or shift, the employee is entitled to be paid at the higher rate for the entire day or shift.

Junior rates of pay

Age	% of Level 1	Weekly	Hourly	Casual (includes 25% casual loading)
19 years	90%	\$898.50	\$23.64	\$29.55
18 years	80%	\$798.60	\$21.02	\$26.28
17 years	70%	\$698.80	\$18.39	\$22.99
16 years	60%	\$599.00	\$15.76	\$19.70

The award also has rates for under 16-year-olds.

Registered trainees

- Registered trainees are employees who are undertaking a traineeship registered with the [Apprenticeship Office](#) at the Department of Training and Workforce Development.
- Employees undertaking a registered traineeship are covered by the Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award.
- An employer is required to pay a registered trainee for time spent at TAFE (or other off the job training) as normal working hours. An employer is not required to pay TAFE fees on behalf of the registered trainee.

Registered trainee rates of pay

Registered trainees who are undertaking qualifications at AQF IV level are entitled to an additional **3.8% loading** on top of the applicable rate as shown in the table below.

Adult registered trainees

A registered trainee who is 21 years of age or older must be paid **\$757.00 per week**.

Junior registered trainees

The pay rates for a registered trainee who is under 21 years of age are based on the highest level of schooling the registered trainee has completed, and how long they have been out of school. The below rates apply to full time registered trainees working a 38-hour week.

School leaver	Highest year of schooling completed		
	Year 10 and below Weekly	Year 11 Weekly	Year 12 Weekly
School leaver	\$356.00	\$425.00	\$493.00
Plus 1 year out of school	\$425.00	\$493.00	\$597.00
Plus 2 years	\$493.00	\$597.00	\$666.00
Plus 3 years	\$597.00	\$666.00	\$757.00
Plus 4 years	\$666.00	\$757.00	
Plus 5 years	\$757.00		

Deductions from pay

- An employer **can only** make a deduction from an employee's pay if:
 - the employer is required by a court or a state or federal law to make the deduction (e.g. tax that must be withheld from the employee's pay);
 - the employee has authorised the deduction in writing (as part of a written employment contract or otherwise) and the deduction is paid on behalf of the employee; or
 - the employer is authorised by the WA award to make the deduction and the deduction is paid on behalf of the employee.
- For employees under the age of 18, employers **are not permitted** to make deductions or require an amount of money to be paid to the employer or another person unless the deduction or payment is agreed to in writing by the employee's parent or guardian.
- A term of a WA award or employment contract providing for a deduction from an employee's pay will be of no effect if it is for the benefit of the employer or a party related to the employer and is unreasonable in the circumstances.
- An employer cannot directly or indirectly compel an employee to accept goods, accommodation or other services instead of money as part of the employee's pay. Visit [Deductions and pay protections](#) for more information.

Allowances

Meal money

An employee required to work overtime for more than two (2) hours, without having been notified the previous day or earlier, must be supplied with a meal by the employer or be paid **\$10.80** and, if owing to the amount of overtime worked, a second or subsequent meal is required the employee must be supplied with such meal paid **\$7.35**. If an employer has provided notice and the employee provides their own meal, but is then not required to work the overtime, the employee is entitled to have the meal allowance paid.

Leading hand allowance

A leading hand must be paid the following allowance.

If placed in charge of:	Per week
less than 3 other employees	\$16.00
between 3 – 10 other employees	\$31.50
more than 10 other employees	\$46.30

Travel allowance

Where an employee, (except for a shift employee) is detained at work until it is too late to travel home by public transport, the employer must provide free transport to the employee's home. This allowance does not apply to any employee who usually has their own means of transport.

Hours

Ordinary hours are:

- an average of 38 hours a week;
- worked Monday to Friday inclusive between the hours of 6 am and 6 pm (except in poultry processing plants where the ordinary starting time may be 5 am); and
- worked on five (5) days of the week on any one of the following cycles:
 - 38 hours within a work cycle not exceeding seven (7) consecutive work days;
 - 152 hours within a work cycle not exceeding 28 consecutive days; or
 - 1,976 hours within a work cycle of one calendar year provided that for each day in excess of 364 days in a calendar year, seven (7) hours and 36 minutes must be added to 1,976 hours.

The employer must give seven (7) days of notice of the time at which they require the employee to commence and cease work unless otherwise agreed between the employer and the union.

Alternative hours arrangements apply to shift workers, view clause 17 of the award on the [WAIRC website](#).

Penalty rates

Where an employee (not being a shift employee) works any ordinary hours between 6 pm and 6 am before and after an enterprise's usual operating hours the employee must be paid 20% **in addition** to their ordinary rate for all such hours worked.

Overtime

Overtime is payable for all time worked by an employee (including a casual employee) in excess of or outside the ordinary hours of work.

When overtime is worked	Overtime rates
Before the usual starting time or after the usual finishing time, or beyond eight (8) hours in any one day	Time and a half for the first 2 hours and double time after that
Saturday after 12 pm (noon)	Double time
Sunday	Double time
Public holiday	Double time and a half

Meal breaks

- An employee must not be compelled to work for more than five (5) hours without an unpaid meal break except where an alternative arrangement is entered into as a result of discussions between the employer and an employee and the majority of employees in the plant or work section concerned.
- An employer may postpone the time of taking a scheduled break for one hour if it is necessary to do so in order to meet a requirement for continuity of operations.

Employment of children

- Under the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*, it is illegal to employ children under the age of 15 in this industry, except if the child is working as part of a school program (e.g. work experience placement) or in a family business.
- School aged children must not be employed during school hours, unless participating in a school program.

Visit [When children can work in Western Australia](#) for more information.

Public holidays

Visit [Public Holidays in Western Australia](#) to view public holiday dates.

Minimum entitlement to be absent on a public holiday

- All employees have a minimum entitlement to be absent from work on a day that is a public holiday.
- An employer is able to request an employee to work on a public holiday if the request is reasonable, but an employee is entitled to refuse a request to work on a public holiday if the request is not reasonable or refusal is reasonable.
- There are a range of specific factors that need to be taken into account when determining whether a request or a refusal of a request is reasonable. These are outlined on [Public holiday pay and arrangements](#).

Payment for public holidays

- If a full time or part time employee is absent from work on a public holiday (and their absence is consistent with the minimum entitlements described above) they are entitled to be paid:
 - as if they were required to work their ordinary hours on the public holiday; and
 - at the rate they would have received as payment for those hours under this WA award.
- If a casual employee does not work on a public holiday they are not entitled to payment.
- Employees who would not ordinarily work on the public holiday (such as part time employees who do not work on that day of the week) and employees on unpaid leave on the public holiday are not entitled to payment.
- If a full time, part time or casual employee works on a public holiday they must be paid at the public holiday pay rates required by this award (refer to 'Overtime').

Flexible working arrangement requests

- Written requests for a flexible work arrangement can be made by employees with at least 12 months' service. Requests can only be made in relation to specific circumstances, which include pregnancy, caring responsibilities, disability, and family and domestic violence. The employer must consider the request and provide a written response within 21 days.
- An employer can refuse the request for specified reasons, including reasonable business grounds.
- Any flexible work arrangement agreed between the employer and employee must be consistent with the working hours and employment arrangements in this WA award.

Visit [Flexible work requests](#) for more information.

Leave entitlements

Quick reference guide

Leave entitlement	Full time	Part time	Casual
Annual leave	✓	✓	✗
Paid personal leave	✓	✓	✗
Unpaid personal leave for caring purposes	✓	✓	✓
Bereavement leave	✓	✓	✓
Unpaid parental leave	✓	✓	✓
Long Service leave	✓	✓	✓
Family and domestic violence leave	✓	✓	✓

This WA award summary covers the basic leave entitlements for employees covered by the Food Industry (Manufacturing or Processing) Award but **does not include** all details on leave obligations and entitlements. Full details of conditions are contained in the award on the [WAIRC website](#), the MCE Act and the LSL Act.

Annual leave

- Full time employees are entitled to a minimum of four (4) weeks of paid annual leave for each year of completed service, up to 152 hours. Part time employees are entitled to a minimum of four (4) weeks of paid annual leave per year paid on a pro rata basis according to the number of hours they are required ordinarily to work in a four (4) week period. Casual employees are not entitled to annual leave.
- Annual leave is a minimum entitlement in the MCE Act and the Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award sets out additional requirements regarding annual leave and annual leave loading.
- During a period of annual leave an employee must be paid annual leave loading of 17.5%, unless they are a shift employee and would have received more for the leave in which case they must be paid what they would have been entitled to had they worked their ordinary rostered shift.
- Annual leave accrues on a weekly basis:
 - A full time employee accrues 2.923 hours of annual leave for each completed week of work.
 - A part time employee accrues the relevant proportion of 2.923 hours annual leave for each completed week of work.
 - The [Annual leave calculation guide](#) can assist with calculating annual leave entitlements.
- For annual leave entitlements when employment ends, see 'Resignation, termination and redundancy'.

Visit [Annual leave](#) for more information.

Personal leave

- Personal leave entitles a full time or part time employee to paid time off work due to either illness or injury to themselves, or because they have to care for a member of their family or household who requires care or support because they are sick, injured or affected by an unexpected emergency.
- Each year, full time and part time employees accrue paid personal leave equal to the number of hours they would ordinarily work in a two (2) week period, up to 76 hours per year. Personal leave is a cumulative entitlement, and any leave not taken in one year is carried over and able to be taken in future years.
- Paid personal leave accrues on a weekly basis for full and part time employees. The [Personal leave calculation guide](#) can assist with calculating paid personal leave entitlements.
- An employee, including a casual employee, is entitled to up to two (2) days of unpaid personal leave per occasion when a member of the employee's family or household requires care or support because of a personal illness or injury or unexpected emergency affecting the member. Full time and part time employees need to take any paid personal leave they have available **before** taking unpaid personal leave.
- Casual employees are not entitled to paid personal leave.
- Personal leave is a minimum entitlement from the MCE Act and the Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award sets out additional requirements regarding personal leave.
- When a business changes ownership, an employee's paid personal leave balance with the old employer must be credited to the employee by the new employer if under the LSL Act:
 - there has been a transmission/transfer of business; and
 - the employee's service is deemed continuous.
- Unused personal leave entitlements are not paid out on termination.

Visit [Personal leave](#) for definitions of 'member of the family or household' or for more information.

Bereavement leave

All employees, including casual employees, are entitled to two (2) days paid bereavement leave on the death of a member of the employee's family or household. The two (2) days need not be consecutive.

Visit [Bereavement leave](#) for more information.

Parental leave

Employees, including eligible casual employees, are entitled to the unpaid parental leave entitlements in the National Employment Standards of the FW Act. Visit [Parental leave](#) for more details.

Family and domestic violence leave

- All employees are entitled to **10 days' paid** family and domestic violence leave under the national FW Act.
- In addition, all state system employees are entitled to **five (5) days' unpaid** family and domestic violence leave under the MCE Act.
- Family and domestic violence leave is available in full at the start of each 12-month period of an employee's employment and does not accumulate from year to year. The leave is available in full to part time and casual employees (that is, it is not pro rata).

Visit [Family and domestic violence leave](#) for more information.

Long service leave

- Long service leave is a paid leave entitlement for full time, part time and casual employees. Under the LSL Act, an employee may be eligible for long service leave:
 - after 10 years of continuous employment with the same employer, and for every five (5) years of continuous employment after the initial 10 years; and
 - on a pro rata basis when their employment ends after seven (7) years of continuous employment but before 10 years.
- The [Long service leave](#) pages of the department's website contain information on who is covered by the LSL Act, the entitlement to long service leave, how long service leave can be taken and frequently asked questions.
- To be entitled to long service leave an employee's employment with their employer must be continuous. There are some paid and unpaid absences or interruptions to an employee's employment that:
 - do not break an employee's continuous employment; and
 - count towards the employee's period of employment for the purposes of accruing long service leave.Some other types of absences do not break an employee's continuous employment, but do not count towards an employee's period of employment for the purposes of accruing long service leave. Visit [What is continuous employment](#) for details.
- An employee's employment may in some circumstances also be continuous despite a change in the ownership of a business and the associated change of employer. This applies regardless of anything written in a sale of business contract. Visit [When a business changes ownership](#) for details.
- The [WA long service leave calculator](#) can provide an estimate of the number of weeks of long service leave an employee is entitled to when employment ends.

Resignation, termination and redundancy

An employee is entitled to be paid out annual leave when employment ends.

Unused annual leave for any completed year of employment (including annual leave loading) gets paid out when employment ends due to resignation, dismissal or redundancy.

Pro rata annual leave for part of a year of employment is paid out when employment ends due to redundancy or dismissal (except for dismissal for serious misconduct) and is also paid out when the employee resigns and gives the notice required under the WA award. Annual leave loading is not paid on pro rata annual leave.

Resignation by the employee

Full time and part time employees are required to provide:

- no notice if on a probationary period of up to three (3) months agreed in advance; or
- one week's notice in all other circumstances.

A casual employee can resign by providing one hour's notice to the employer.

Termination

An employer is required to give a casual employee one hours' notice of termination.

Except in cases of serious misconduct, an employer is required to give full time and part time employees the following period of notice of termination (or payment in lieu):

Period of continuous service	Notice period
Less than 1 year	1 week
More than 1 year but less than 3 years*	2 weeks
More than 3 years but less than 5 years*	3 weeks
More than 5 years*	4 weeks

*Employees over 45 years of age with two (2) or more years of continuous service must receive an additional week's notice.

Redundancy

An employee is redundant when their employer has made a definite decision that they no longer wish the job the employee has been doing to be done by anyone.

When an employee has been made redundant they are entitled to receive:

- the appropriate notice period or pay in lieu of notice, as outlined in 'Termination';
- paid leave for job interviews;
- any unpaid wages;
- any unused accrued and pro rata annual leave;
- any unused accrued long service leave;
- pro rata long service leave (if applicable); and
- severance pay (if applicable).

Award severance pay – Employers who employ less than 15 employees

Employers covered by this award who employ less than 15 employees must pay the severance pay entitlements in the award when an employee is made redundant, as outlined in the following table.

Award severance pay does not need to be paid to casual employees, apprentices, employees who have been engaged for a specific period of time or for a specified task or tasks, or employees terminated as a consequence of conduct that justifies instant dismissal.

Period of continuous service with employer	Award severance pay
Less than 1 year	Nil
1 year but less than 2 years	4 weeks
2 years but less than 3 years	6 weeks
3 years but less than 4 years	7 weeks
4 years and over	8 weeks

Severance pay – Employers who employ 15 or more employees

Employers covered by this award who employ 15 or more employees must pay severance pay when an employee is made redundant, as outlined in the following table.

Period of continuous service*	Number of weeks severance pay
Less than 1 year	Nil
1 year and less than 2 years	4 weeks
2 years and less than 3 years	6 weeks
3 years and less than 4 years	7 weeks
4 years and less than 5 years	8 weeks
5 years and less than 6 years	10 weeks
6 years and less than 7 years	11 weeks
7 years and less than 8 years	13 weeks
8 years and less than 9 years	14 weeks
9 years and less than 10 years	16 weeks
10 years and over	12 weeks

*An employee's period of continuous service includes any service with that business under a previous employer where there has been a transfer of the business.

These severance pay requirements do not apply to probationary employees, apprentices and trainees, casual and contract employees or employees terminated due to serious misconduct or for other reasons not related to redundancy.

Redundancy pay is calculated based on the applicable number of weeks' severance multiplied by ordinary time earnings. Ordinary time earnings excludes overtime, penalty rates, and allowances.

If the employee resigns during the notice period, they are entitled to the same severance pay they would receive if they had worked until the end of the notice period. However, in this circumstance the employee is not entitled to payment in lieu of notice.

Visit [Redundancy](#) for more information on redundancy obligations and payments.

Dismissal requirements

Under state laws, employees cannot be dismissed if to do so would be harsh, unfair or oppressive. There must be a valid and fair reason for dismissal, such as:

- consistent unsatisfactory work performance (which has been raised with the employee and the employee given further training and an opportunity to improve their work performance);
- inappropriate behaviour or actions or;
- serious misconduct.

[Dismissal and unfair dismissal](#) outlines obligations and requirements when an employee is terminated.

Pay slip and record keeping requirements

Employers must provide all employees with a pay slip, and must keep employment records as required by state employment law. There are penalties for not keeping records and not providing a pay slip.

Pay slips

Employers need to provide a pay slip to each employee within one working day of paying the employee for work performed. The employer can decide whether to give a hard copy or electronic form of the pay slip.

A pay slip needs to include the following information:

- the employer's name and Australian Business Number (if any);
- the employee's name;
- the period to which the pay slip relates;
- the date on which the payment referred to in the pay slip was made;
- the gross and net amounts of the payment, and any amount withheld as tax;
- any incentive-based payment, or payment of a bonus, loading, penalty rates or another monetary allowance or separately identifiable entitlement;
- if an amount is deducted from the gross amount of the payment:
 - the name of the person in relation to whom or which the deduction was made;
 - if the deduction was paid into a fund or account - the name, or the name and number, of the fund or account; and
 - the purpose of the deduction;
- if the employee is paid at an hourly rate of pay:
 - the rate of pay for the employee's ordinary hours;
 - the number of hours worked during the period to which the pay slip relates; and
 - the amount of the payment made at that rate;
- if the employee is paid a weekly or an annual rate of pay - the rate as at the latest date to which the payment relates; and
- if the employer is required to make superannuation contributions for the benefit of the employee:
 - the amount of each contribution that the employer made during the period to which the pay slip relates and the name, or the name and number, of any fund to which the contribution was made; or
 - the amounts of the contributions that the employer is liable to make in relation to the period to which the pay slip relates, and the name, or the name and number, of any fund to which the contributions will be made.

[Pay slip requirements](#) provides more information and a pay slip template to assist employers.

Employment records

Record keeping requirements

It is compulsory for all employers to keep employment records which include the following information:

- the employee's name and, if under 21 years of age, their date of birth;
- the employer's name and Australian Business Number (if any);
- the name of the WA award that applies (in this case the Food Industry (Food Manufacturing or Processing) Award);
- date the employee commenced employment with the employer;
- for each day of work:
 - the time at which the employee started and finished work;
 - period/s for which the employee was paid; and
 - details of work breaks including meal breaks;
- for each pay period:
 - the employee's designation (such as full time, part time, casual) and employee classification;
 - the gross and net amounts paid to the employee;
 - any amount withheld as tax; and
 - all deductions from pay and the reasons for them;
- any incentive-based payment, bonus, loading, penalty rates or other monetary allowance or entitlement;
- all leave taken, whether paid, partly paid or unpaid;
- the following matters relating to superannuation:
 - the date on which each superannuation contribution was made, the amount of the contributions, the period over which the contributions were made, the name of any fund to which a contribution was made;
 - how the employer worked out the amount of superannuation owed; and
 - any choice made by the employee as to which fund their contributions are to be made and the date on which the choice was made;
- the information necessary for the calculation of and payment of long service leave under the LSL Act. Employers are also required to comply with the record keeping requirements in the LSL Act. Visit [Long service leave](#) for details;
- any other information necessary to show that the pay and benefits received by the employee comply with the WA award and other legal obligations such as employee entitlements under the MCE Act or LSL Act; and
- any other information required by the WA award to be recorded.

It is also compulsory to keep employment records that detail specific information regarding:

- termination related matters; and
- any supported wage system or a supported wage industrial instrument provision that applies to an employee with a disability.

If an employer makes a payment to an employee in cash, the employer must provide a record of the payment to the employee and ensure that a copy of the record of payment is kept as an employment record.

[Record keeping obligations](#) provides more information and record keeping templates to assist employers.

Time periods for keeping records

It is compulsory that each entry in relation to annual leave and long service leave must be retained during the employee's period of employment and for not less than seven (7) years after the employment ends, and each other employment record must be retained for not less than seven (7) years after it is made.