

Casual workers: Filling gaps at short notice

With the summer holidays approaching, now is the time to think about how you'll fill staffing gaps quickly. Casual employees could be the answer.

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Unexpected events, such as a staff member calling in sick, can potentially derail your business day. So having casual staff available is very useful.

But tread carefully – if you treat casual workers like part-time staff, eg give them regular hours, this is a breach of employment law.

Casual work is intermittent or irregular, and casual employees don't have to accept every offer of work you make.

Just like the rest of your employees, people who work casually for you need an employment agreement.

Business.govt.nz's online [Employment Agreement Builder\(external link\)](https://eab.business.govt.nz) (<https://eab.business.govt.nz>) can guide you through the process.

Paperwork

The casual agreement should make it clear:

- There is no guarantee of work on a specific day.
- The amount of work they'll get will fluctuate.
- How you'll let them know when you would like them to work.
- They're not obliged to make themselves available for work if asked.

Don't get them confused with part-time workers – if the work is in a regular pattern, they're not casuals and should have a permanent part-time agreement.

As an employer, remember to keep records of the start and finish dates for workers

And make sure new staff complete a [tax code declaration form\(external link\)](http://www.ird.govt.nz/forms-guides/keyword/businessincometax/ir330-form-tax-code.html) (<http://www.ird.govt.nz/forms-guides/keyword/businessincometax/ir330-form-tax-code.html>) (IR330).

Time off

Casual employees are entitled to holidays. Because they don't have set hours, you can agree with them that instead of earning annual leave, you'll pay them an extra 8% of their salary or wage each pay day.

They're also entitled to sick leave and bereavement leave after six months of starting work with you if they fulfil certain criteria regarding their hours. Holidays and leave are explained on the Business.govt.nz website.

If you employ casual agricultural workers, then check out the Inland Revenue website for [information on how to tax their pay\(external link\)](http://www.ird.govt.nz/payroll-employers/make-deductions/special-workers/emp-deductions-special-workers.html#caw) (<http://www.ird.govt.nz/payroll-employers/make-deductions/special-workers/emp-deductions-special-workers.html#caw>).

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[They can be a great way to get the help you need while staying flexible, but the contracts can be tricky.](#)

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