Employment Standards Act

What is the *Employment Standards Act*?

Everyone has a right to fairness in the workplace. The Employment Standards Act (ESA) is a set of laws that outlines the minimum working conditions that employers and employees must follow in most Ontario workplaces. There are some exceptions to the ESA. The laws and regulations in the act were created over years through collaboration between government, businesses and unions. Similar employment laws exist in other provinces. The Act deals with such issues as minimum wage, overtime pay, payroll deductions, breaks, vacation pay, holidays, union dues and parental leave.

Most western societies have negotiated fair and equitable employment standards for their citizens. Many underdeveloped and developing economies have very poor employment standards with no regard for the workers.

What does the *Employment Standards Act* have to say? Here are some of the laws that might interest you.

Minimum Wage

The minimum wage is the lowest amount a worker can be legally paid. There are some exceptions to the guidelines. Students working at part-time jobs are paid less than the general minimum wage. Students with part-time jobs should be aware of this fact.

Meals and Coffee Breaks

An employee must not work for more than five hours in a row without getting a 30-minute eating period free from work. At a coop placement, students are expected to take their coffee break and lunch with the staff of the business.

Hours of Work and Overtime

You are not being paid a salary to be at coop. Your payment is experienced gained in a career path for your future. You also get high school credits. For those of you who work for a salary, the overtime rate is 1.5 times the regular pay. This is often referred to as “time-and-a-half”. The ESA states that:

* You can receive overtime pay after working eight hours in one day.
* Most employees receive overtime pay after 44 hours of work in a week.
* *Lieu time* is a work agreement that allows workers to receive time off instead of overtime pay.

Payroll Deductions

Payroll deductions is money that an employer holds back (deducts) from an employee’s paycheque and remits to the government on a worker’s behalf. Deductions from your paycheque include: income tax, employment insurance premiums and Canada Pension Plan contributions.

Public Holidays

In order to qualify to take a public holiday, a full or part time worker must have:

* Been employed for three months.
* Earned wages on at least 12 days during the four work weeks before the holidays.
* Worked on the regularly scheduled day before and after the holiday.

Ontario has five paid holidays:

1. New Year’s day 2) Victoria Day 3) Thanksgiving Day

4) Family Day 5) Canada Day 6) Christmas Day

7) Good Friday 8) Labour Day 9) Boxing Day

Employees who are asked to work during a public holiday usually receive a premium or “time-and-a-half” pay.

Click on the following link to view details about your rights as a worker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnjUHcMYPLA>

The website <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca> is the official website of the Ministry of Labour for young and new workers. It contains a comprehensive list of information for young workers regarding health and safety, employment standards and dealing with workplace problems.