

A-Z Guide

WORK AND LIFE BALANCE



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Overview

The promotion of work-life balance is based on the idea that it is a benefit to both an employee and an employer for a worker to have a healthy balance between their job and their life outside work. The benefits include obtaining and retaining high caliber staff, increasing productivity and motivation, and improving the company's reputation.

The Employment Relations Act 2000 (the Act) allows an employee to request a variation to their working arrangements. This is a legal right of request, however the ability to provide for a work-life balance is not limited to this strictly legal requirement. Instead, an employer can offer various options above and beyond the legal minimum and can also consciously try to accept requests under the Act even where the circumstances are such that they are able to lawfully decline.

Refer to **A-Z Guide on Flexible Working Arrangements** for further information.

Possible Initiatives

Work-life balance policies have become popular amongst organisations that take a more humanist approach to managing their employees; where the employer creates a positive work environment to encourage creativity, motivation and job satisfaction.

Common work and life balance initiatives include:

- Flexible work practices
- Compressed working weeks
- Part-time work
- Time in lieu for working overtime
- Leave provisions
- Annual leave greater than the minimum entitlement
- Service leave
- Sick leave greater than the minimum entitlement – including accumulation
- Culturally sensitive bereavement leave
- Paid parental leave greater than the minimum entitlement
- Paid jury service
- Sabbatical
- Health and wellbeing
- Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP)
- Sexual harassment policies
- Medical insurance
- Financial Assistance
- Registration or license fees
- Childcare assistance
- Study assistance

Business New Zealand has published a booklet entitled *Balancing Work and Life – flexible work explained*. It gives examples of flexible working arrangements and explains why more can always be done in this field.



Further Information

For more information on work and life balance initiatives you should contact your EMA Advice Employment Relations Consultant. You may also wish to contact:

- Equal Employment Opportunities Trust: diversityworks.nz.org.nz
- The Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment: www.mbie.govt.nz
- Employment NZ: <https://www.employment.govt.nz/workplace-policies/productive-workplaces/work-life-balance/>
- EAP Services: www.vitae.co.nz
- The Human Rights Commission: www.hrc.co.nz
- The Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner: <https://www.hrc.co.nz/our-work/>

Refer to the following **A-Z Guides** for supplementary information:

- Disability
- Discrimination in Employment
- Flexible Working Arrangements
- Human Rights
- Incapacity
- Pre-Employment Checks
- Recruitment and Selection
- Stress and Fatigue

Remember

- Always call AdviceLine on 0800 300 362 to check you have the latest guide.
Never hesitate to ask AdviceLine for help in interpreting and applying this guide to your situation.
- Use our AdviceLine employment advisors as a sounding board to test your views.
- Get one of our consultants to draft an agreement template that's tailor-made for your business.

This guide is not comprehensive and should not be used as a substitute for professional advice.

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