

# Fact sheet

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## About awards

### What is an award?

An award is an enforceable document containing minimum terms and conditions of employment including rates of pay and hours of work.

Together with the National Employment Standards (a legislated set of minimum standards effective from 1 January 2010), they provide a fair and relevant minimum safety net of terms and conditions.

In general, an award applies to employees in a particular industry or occupation and is used as the benchmark for assessing enterprise agreements before approval.

The Fair Work Commission has responsibility for making and varying awards in the national workplace relations system.

### Types of awards

Awards in the national workplace relations system include two main types:

- modern awards, and
- award-based transitional instruments (including former federal and state awards created before 27 March 2006) which are being reviewed.

### Modern awards

Modern awards are those awards created under the national workplace relations system which relate to specific industries or occupations.

122 modern awards came into effect on 1 January 2010.

### Award-based transitional instruments under review

The Fair Work Commission is continuing the award modernisation process begun by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. During 2013 the Fair Work Commission will review:

- federal awards created before 27 March 2006 and former state awards now in the national system (notional agreements preserving State awards), which apply to a single enterprise where the employer is a constitutional corporation, and
- State reference public sector transitional; awards.

### Which award applies to me?

To find out which award you are covered by, contact the Fair Work Infoline (run by the Fair Work Ombudsman) on **13 13 94**.

Some employees are covered by an enterprise agreement, not an award. Enterprise agreements are agreements made at an enterprise level between employers and employees about terms and conditions of employment.

Awards cover a whole industry or occupation and only provide a safety net of minimum pay rates and employment conditions. Enterprise agreements can be tailored to meet the needs of particular enterprises.

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This fact sheet is not intended to be comprehensive. It is designed to assist in gaining an understanding of the Fair Work Commission (the Commission) and its work. The Commission does not provide legal advice.