

Know your rights before you need them

Workshop worksheet · No names needed · Fill it in as we go, then flip it over to check

PLAIN LAW
PROJECT

1 Myth or Law?

WARM-UP

Breaks are only for full-time workers.

MYTH

LAW

If you're called in and sent home after an hour, you still get paid for 3 hours.

MYTH

LAW

Your boss can take money out of your pay when your till comes up short.

MYTH

LAW

A landlord can't ask for a damage deposit bigger than one month's rent.

MYTH

LAW

Once you sign a contract, you can never cancel it.

MYTH

LAW

2 Real situations

WORK IN GROUPS

YOUR FIRST JOB

Maya, 17

Maya works at a fast food place. Last Saturday she worked a 6-hour shift with no break. On Sunday she was scheduled for 5 hours, but her manager sent her home after 1 hour because it was slow.

WHAT RULES APPLY?

WHO COULD SHE CONTACT?

YOUR FIRST LEASE

Daniel, 20

Daniel moved out of his rental 3 weeks ago. He hasn't gotten his damage deposit back or any list of what was taken off. He and his landlord never did a move-in inspection.

WHAT RULES APPLY?

WHO COULD HE CONTACT?

BEFORE YOU SIGN

Priya, 22

Four days ago, a door-to-door seller signed Priya up for a \$400 water filter. She's changed her mind. The seller says "all sales are final."

WHAT RULES APPLY?

WHO COULD SHE CONTACT?

3 Before I sign checklist

KEEP THIS ONE

- ☐ I read the whole thing, including the fine print.
- ☐ I know the total cost, including fees and taxes.
- ☐ Anything promised out loud is written in the contract.

- ☐ I know how long it lasts and if it renews by itself.
- ☐ I know how to cancel and what cancelling costs.
- ☐ I got my own copy.

4 Quick quiz

LAST 5 MINUTES

1. Your shift is 6 hours. What break are you owed?

- ☐ None ☐ 15 minutes ☐ 30 minutes

3. The biggest damage deposit a landlord can charge is...

- ☐ One month's rent ☐ Two months' rent ☐ Any amount

5. You bought something over \$25 from a door-to-door seller. How long do you usually have to cancel?

- ☐ You can't cancel ☐ 10 days ☐ 30 days

2. Overtime usually starts after...

- ☐ 8 hrs a day or 44 a week ☐ 10 hrs a day ☐ 40 hrs a week

4. Before entering your place, a landlord usually needs to give...

- ☐ No notice ☐ 24 hours' written notice ☐ A text 1 hour before

How confident do you feel about your rights at work, renting and contracts? (1 = not at all, 5 = very)

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Your rights, on one page

Checked October 2026 against Government of Alberta sources. Laws change, so check before you act.

PLAIN LAW
PROJECT

Your first job

- Minimum wage is **\$15/hour**. Students under 18 can be paid **\$13** for their first 28 hours a week during the school year.
- Shift over **5 hours** = a **30-minute break**. If you can't leave during it, it must be paid.
- Called in to work? You're paid for at least **3 hours**, even if you're sent home early (unless you asked to leave).
- Overtime usually starts after **8 hours a day** or **44 a week**, at **1.5×** pay.
- No deductions for **uniforms** or honest **mistakes**. A short till can only come off your pay under strict conditions, with your written OK.
- Job ended? Final pay is due within **10 days** after the pay period ends, or **31 days** after your last day. Your employer picks which.
- You can make a free complaint up to **6 months** after your last day.

Your first lease

- A damage deposit can't be more than **one month's rent**.
- **Move-in and move-out inspections** are required. You and the landlord both sign, and you get a copy.
- After you move out, the landlord has **10 days** to return your deposit or give you an itemized list of deductions.
- To enter, a landlord usually needs to give **24 hours' written notice**, and can only enter between **8 a.m. and 8 p.m.** Emergencies are an exception.
- Disputes can go to the **RTDRS**, which is usually faster and cheaper than court.

Before you sign

- A **contract** is an agreement the law will enforce. It can be written, spoken, or a click online.
- Read all of it, including how to cancel, and **keep a copy**.
- Bought something over **\$25** from a door-to-door seller? You usually have **10 days** to cancel, and you don't need a reason.
- Online purchase over **\$50**? You can cancel within **7 days** if the total cost wasn't properly shown, or if it wasn't delivered within 30 days.
- Gym and phone plans: check the length, auto-renewal and cancellation fees **before** you sign.

Red flags

- Paid in cash with no record of your hours
- Money off your cheque for mistakes or uniforms
- "Sign today, the deal ends tonight"
- Long shifts with no breaks
- A landlord who skips the inspection
- "All sales are final" on a door-to-door sale

Questions about work

Employment Standards Contact Centre
1-877-427-3731 (toll-free) · 780-427-3731 (Edmonton)

Free legal help in Edmonton

Student Legal Services of Edmonton: 780-492-8244
Edmonton Community Legal Centre: eclc.ca

Questions about renting or buying

Consumer Contact Centre
1-877-427-4088

Free legal help in Calgary

Calgary Legal Guidance: clg.ab.ca
Plain-language law for all of Alberta: cplea.ca