



Autumn HR Essentials: Wage Changes, Leave Planning & Wellbeing

Minimum Wage Increases from 1 April

From 1 April 2025, the adult minimum wage in New Zealand will increase from **\$23.15 to \$23.50 per hour**. The starting-out and training minimum wage will rise from **\$18.52 to \$18.80 per hour**.

While this increase supports employee income growth and cost of living adjustments, it creates pressure for many businesses—especially those with large hourly-paid workforces or tightly structured pay bands. Employers should:

- **Audit all employee pay rates** to ensure no one is being paid below the new legal minimum. It's a good opportunity to also check hours worked against salary paid for staff who work additional hours at times and have an availability provision. And if you also have casuals, you could check that none have started to work regular days and/or hours of work.
- **Update payroll systems and employment agreements** where relevant.
- **Consult with employees about proposed changes and/or the increased hourly rate (for those on the minimum wage)**, ideally before they notice the difference on their payslips.

- **Assess the flow-on impact** to internal pay equity—especially when lower-level employees may now earn close to, or more than, more senior staff if pay structures aren't adjusted.

Don't hesitate to reach out if you need assistance with employment agreement changes or remuneration processes.

Public Holidays & Leave Planning in Autumn

With Easter (Good Friday and Easter Monday), and Anzac Day all falling in April, it's critical to get public holiday and leave planning right. Many employees look to take leave around long weekends, and errors in entitlements can quickly lead to grievances.

Key employer responsibilities include:

- **Correctly identifying “otherwise working days”** – this determines who qualifies for specific public holiday entitlements. Flexibility and part-time arrangements can sometimes make this assessment tricky.
- **Paying employees who work on public holidays** correctly; **at time and a half**, and ensuring they receive an **alternative day off** if the day is otherwise a working day.
- **Planning staffing levels** early to avoid disruption, especially in industries that remain operational over public holidays (e.g. hospitality, healthcare, and logistics).
- **Encouraging early annual leave requests** to manage workload and employee expectations in a fair and transparent manner.

Being proactive with public holiday planning is not only a legal obligation - it supports morale and ensures operational continuity.

Employee Wellbeing in the Colder Months


As the days shorten and temperatures drop, many employees report a dip in energy, motivation, and mood. This shift is natural, but if left unaddressed, it can impact productivity and increase absenteeism.

Here's how to help your team stay well and engaged:

- **Encourage outdoor breaks** during daylight hours. Something as simple as a walk at lunchtime can support physical and mental health.
- **Re-energise internal communication** – keep teams engaged through regular check-ins, team meetings, and informal touchpoints.
- **Boost your wellbeing resources** – remind staff of available support (like EAP), host wellbeing-themed events, and consider light-touch wellbeing initiatives like flu vaccinations or healthy morning teas.
- **Pay attention to signs of burnout or disengagement** – if someone's performance is dropping or they're withdrawing, have a check-in conversation.
- **Utilise flexibility** options where possible e.g. adjust start times, support remote work, and allow for family routines disrupted by seasonal change.

Small, proactive steps taken now can prevent issues compounding through winter and demonstrate care that supports retention.

I can support you over this time. Don't hesitate to reach out to discuss options.

 021 932 332

 marie@tovioconsulting.co.nz

 www.tovioconsulting.co.nz