



WORKER RIGHTS · CONNECTICUT

Know Your Rights in Connecticut

What every hospitality worker should know, in plain language.
No legal jargon.

This guide is general information about Connecticut employment law as of October 2026. It is not legal advice, and not a substitute for talking to a licensed attorney about your situation.

General information only — not legal advice.

As of October 2026 · Prepared by JYNX Recruiting · jynxrecruiting.com

Your Paycheck

Connecticut runs on precision. The wage is high and indexed, payday is weekly by law, and a fired worker is paid the next business day. The details split in ways that cost money when you blur them: two different tipped cash wages in the same industry, and two different paid-leave programs that are not the same program. In Connecticut, the fine print is the right.

- Minimum wage: \$16.94 an hour since January 1, 2026, adjusted every January 1 by a federal cost index. The announced rate for January 1, 2027 is \$17.48.
- Workers under 18 may be paid 85% of the minimum wage for their first 90 days of employment (\$14.40 at the 2026 rate). The full minimum applies after that.
- Payday is weekly by law. Every employer must pay weekly on a regular payday set in advance, unless the Labor Commissioner has permitted a less frequent schedule.
- Final pay depends on how you left. If you were discharged, you must be paid all wages by the next business day. If you quit or were laid off, you are paid on the next regular payday.
- Your employer may not withhold or divert any part of your wages except as the law requires, on a form you authorized that the Labor Commissioner has approved, or for a medical premium or retirement plan.

Tips: Two Tracks, Not One

Connecticut does not have a single tipped wage. CT DOL's official Tip Statement, effective January 1, 2026, sets two structures.

- Service employees, who serve food and drink to seated patrons plus incidental duties: a guaranteed cash wage of \$6.38 an hour, with gratuities of at least 62.98% of the minimum wage making up the rest.
- Bartenders: a guaranteed cash wage of \$8.23 an hour, with gratuities of at least 51.42% of the minimum wage making up the rest. For bartenders, \$8.23 plus \$8.71 equals the full \$16.94.
- You will be asked to sign the Tip Statement, acknowledging your gratuity amounts. It is designed to attach to IRS Form 4070 for reporting tips.
- Side-work cap: during service hours, non-service duties for tipped staff are capped at two hours in a shift and 20% of the shift, per the Tip Statement's check-offs.

Overtime

- Time and a half after 40 hours in a workweek, on hours actually worked. Connecticut requires no daily, weekend, or holiday overtime premium except by agreement.
- Hospitality exception in your favor: the Restaurant and Hotel Restaurant Wage Order requires not less than 1½ times the minimum rate for all time worked on the seventh consecutive day. Note the premium is keyed to the minimum rate, not your regular rate.

The Meal Period

- You may not be required to work 7½ or more consecutive hours without a meal period of at least 30 consecutive minutes, placed after the first two hours and before the last two hours of the stretch.
- Exceptions exist. A union contract can govern instead. Shifts with fewer than five employees on duty, single-coverage positions, and public-safety situations may be exempt. You and your employer may agree in writing to a different schedule. An employer whose existing paid rest or meal breaks already total 30 or more minutes within the 7½-hour stretch satisfies the rule through those breaks.

Paid Sick Leave

- Under Connecticut's expanded paid sick leave law, you earn 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours a year, paid by your employer. Accrual starts your first day. You may first use leave 120 calendar days after hire. Leave is usable in 1-hour increments. Up to 40 unused hours carry over, or your employer may front-load the year.
- Coverage is phasing in by employer size: employers with 25 or more employees since January 1, 2025; 11 or more since January 1, 2026; and every employer, 1 or more, from January 1, 2027. At a covered employer, effectively all employees count: full-time, part-time, per diem, temporary, hourly, and salaried alike.
- Exceptions on CT DOL's official notice: seasonal employees, who work 120 days or fewer a year, and certain construction trades under union multiemployer plans.

Paid Leave: Two Programs, Two Jobs

- CT Paid Leave is the money. It is run by the CT Paid Leave Authority and funded entirely by a 0.5% payroll deduction from employees. It pays 95% of your base weekly earnings up to 40 times the minimum wage, plus 60% of earnings above that, capped at 60 times the minimum wage: \$1,016.40 a week at the 2026 wage. Benefits run up to 12 weeks in a 12-month period when you need time to care for yourself or a family member. Program details and claims: ctpaidleave.org.
- Connecticut FMLA is the job protection. Up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for a new child, adoption or foster placement, caring for a family member with a serious health condition, your own serious health condition, organ or bone-marrow donation, or a military qualifying exigency, plus up to 2 additional weeks for pregnancy incapacitation and up to 26 weeks to care for a covered servicemember.
- You are eligible for Connecticut FMLA after 3 months with your employer, and the law covers employers with one or more employees. Municipalities, boards of education, and nonpublic schools are treated separately.

Wage Ranges and Salary History

- You have the right to the wage range. An employer may not refuse to give an applicant the wage range for the position, at the earlier of your request or the time an offer of compensation is made. Employees get the range for their own position on hiring, on a change of position, or at their first request.
- Note what Connecticut does not do: it does not require the range to appear in the job posting itself. The right is yours to trigger. Ask.
- Salary history: an employer may not ask about your past wages, or have anyone else ask, unless you voluntarily disclose them.
- Talking about pay is protected. Your employer may not bar you from disclosing, discussing, or asking about wages, may not make you waive those rights, and may not punish you for exercising them. Violations can be sued on within two years, with compensatory and punitive damages and attorney's fees.

Non-Competes

- Connecticut has no general non-compete ban. Outside specific professions, enforceability is a judge-made reasonableness question. In the Labor Commissioner's own 2025 testimony, the only bans under CT DOL's jurisdiction are for broadcasters and security guards.
- Strict statutory caps exist for physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants: covenants must be necessary to a legitimate business interest, individually signed, and capped at one year and fifteen miles from the primary practice site. They become unenforceable if the employer lets the agreement lapse without a bona fide renewal offer, or ends the relationship other than for cause.
- A general wage-threshold reform bill (HB 7196, 2025) stalled in committee and is not law. Do not treat it as protection you have.

Hospitality Callouts

- Two cash wages in one industry: \$6.38 for service employees and \$8.23 for bartenders. Being classified on the wrong track misprices every shift. See Section 2.
- Reporting-time guarantee under the Restaurant and Hotel Wage Order: if you regularly report for work, or are called in, and you are able and willing to work, you are assured a minimum of two hours' earnings at not less than the minimum rate for that day, unless you were given adequate notice the day before not to report.
- Seventh-consecutive-day premium at 1½ times the minimum rate. See Section 3.

- The signed Tip Statement is part of your paperwork. Read it before you sign. It records the gratuity structure you are acknowledging. See Section 2.
- CT DOL publishes a dedicated Restaurant and Hotel Workers minimum-wage poster. The industry has its own wage order, and its rules differ from the general ones.

Filing a Claim

- Wage claims go to the CT DOL Wage and Workplace Standards Division: Statement of Claim for Wages, on the wage-complaint page at portal.ct.gov/dol. Phone: (860) 263-6790. CT DOL main: (860) 263-6000. Address: 200 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield. The Division investigates wage nonpayment going back two years from your complaint.
- Retaliation for filing is separately banned. Retaliation complaints go to the DOL Legal Division.
- Discrimination complaints go to the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), in writing and under oath, within 300 days of the alleged act.
- CT Paid Leave claims and appeals: ctpaidleave.org. The Authority decides claims; CT DOL hears appeals only.