



WORKER RIGHTS • GEORGIA

Your Rights as a Worker in Georgia

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

This guide is general information only — not legal advice, as of October 2026. It is 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

You Can Be Fired for Almost Any Reason, but Not an Illegal One

- Georgia is an "at-will" state. Your employer can let you go for a good reason, a bad reason, or no reason at all.
- But they cannot fire you for: your race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability (federal law); filing a workers' comp claim; complaining about unpaid wages or unsafe working conditions; refusing to break the law; taking jury duty — Georgia law specifically protects this.

If you were fired for one of these reasons, consider talking to an employment lawyer.

Your Paycheck Is Protected

- Minimum wage: Georgia's state minimum wage is \$5.15/hour, but it almost never applies — nearly all employers are covered by the federal \$7.25/hour instead. Overtime: 1.5x your rate for hours past 40 in a week (federal law; Georgia has no state overtime law).
- Final paycheck: Georgia has no state deadline — but federal law requires your employer to pay everything you're owed by the next regular payday. If they don't, you can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Deductions: your employer generally cannot dock your pay without your agreement. If a deduction showed up you never agreed to, document it.

If You Earn Tips

- Your employer can pay a cash wage of \$2.13/hour, but your tips must bring you to \$7.25/hour for every hour worked. If they don't, your employer owes you the difference.

Sick Leave and Family Care

- Georgia does not require employers to offer paid sick leave.
- But Georgia's Family Care Act says: if your employer has 25 or more employees and offers sick leave, you can use up to 5 days of it per year to care for an immediate family member — not just yourself.
- Nursing mothers: Georgia law requires employers to give reasonable paid break time and a private location (not a restroom) to express milk.

Vacation and PTO

- Georgia does not require employers to offer vacation, sick leave, or holidays.
- But once your employer promises paid time off, it becomes part of your compensation — they owe it to you.

Breaks

- Georgia does not require meal or rest breaks for adult workers. If your employer gives you a break, that's their policy — not the law.

If You're Under 21 and Serve Alcohol

- You must be 18 to dispense, serve, sell, or take orders for alcoholic beverages.

Non-Compete Agreements

- Georgia is more employer-friendly than most states on non-competes. Under the Georgia Restrictive Covenants Act, agreements must be reasonable in time, geographic area, and scope — but unlike some states, Georgia courts can rewrite an overbroad agreement to make it enforceable instead of throwing it out. Time limits of 2 years or less are presumed reasonable.

Every agreement is different — talk to an employment lawyer before you sign one or act against one.

Discrimination: Where to Go

- Georgia has no state agency that handles discrimination claims for private-sector workers — and no broad state anti-discrimination law for private employers. Your protections come from federal law, enforced by the EEOC (Atlanta: 1-800-669-4000).
- Georgia does have narrower state laws covering age discrimination (ages 40–70, any employer), disability discrimination (15+ employees), and sex-based pay discrimination (10+ employees).

What Georgia Does Not Require

- No state pay transparency law. No state paid sick leave mandate. No minimum wage above the federal \$7.25 in practice. No state deadline for your final paycheck (federal next-payday rule applies). Cities and counties cannot set a higher local minimum wage — state law prohibits it. Georgia is a right-to-work state — you can't be forced to join a union as a condition of employment.

If Your Rights Were Violated

- Wage issues (unpaid wages, missing overtime): U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division — Georgia has no state wage-enforcement agency.
- Discrimination: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) — 1-800-669-4000.
- Unsafe working conditions: Federal OSHA.

Deadlines apply to many claims, so don't wait. And when in doubt, consider talking to an employment lawyer — many offer free consultations.