

District of Columbia labor law checklist 2026

Minimum wage	\$18.40 an hour.
Tipped cash wage	\$10.30
Next change	Inflation adjustment (rate announced in spring) on July 1, 2027
Overtime	The federal FLSA rule applies: overtime at 1.5 times the regular rate after 40 hours in a workweek. There is no daily overtime rule.
Exempt salary test	Federal \$684 a week (\$35,568 a year).
Meal breaks	No state meal break law for adult employees. Federal law doesn't require meal breaks either, but if you give one of 30 minutes or more and the employee is fully relieved of duty, it can be unpaid.
Rest breaks	No state rest break law for adults. Under federal law, short breaks of 5 to 20 minutes that you choose to give must be paid.
Final pay if fired	By the next business day.
Final pay if they quit	By the next regular payday or within 7 days, whichever comes first.
Unused PTO	Not required by state law. Follow your written policy or contract, and apply it consistently.
Paid sick leave	Paid sick and safe leave for employers of every size: from 1 hour per 87 hours (up to 3 days) for employers with fewer than 25 employees, to 1 hour per 37 hours (up to 7 days) for employers with 100 or more.
Paid family leave	DC Paid Family Leave: up to 12 weeks of parental leave and other leave types, funded entirely by an employer payroll tax.
Pay transparency	Required for employers of every size: a pay range in every posting, plus a disclosure of health care benefits before the first interview.
New hire reporting	Report each new hire within 20 days of the hire date, the federal deadline.
State income tax	Withhold state income tax.
State agency	DC Department of Employment Services: https://does.dc.gov

What trips up District of Columbia employers

- ☐ The minimum wage changes on July 1, not January 1, so payroll updates fall mid-year.
- ☐ The paid family leave tax is paid by the employer only. Don't deduct it from wages.
- ☐ Job postings must include pay ranges, and you can't ask candidates for their pay history.
- ☐ Check the minimum wage on January 1 and July 1, and update payroll and posters.
- ☐ Confirm final pay timing before every termination meeting.

All 50 states and DC, comparison tables, and a free CSV: hrtally.com/state-labor-laws

Compare HR and payroll software for multi-state employers at www.hrtally.com