

Kentucky labor law checklist 2026

Minimum wage	\$7.25 an hour. The state rate matches the federal \$7.25.
Tipped cash wage	\$2.13
Next change	None scheduled
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	A reasonable meal period, usually 30 minutes, given between the 3rd and 5th hour of work. It doesn't have to be paid if the employee is relieved of duty.
Rest breaks	A paid 10-minute rest period for each 4 hours worked, in addition to the meal period.
Final pay if fired	By the next regular payday or within 14 days, whichever is later.
Final pay if they quit	By the next regular payday or within 14 days, whichever is later.
Unused PTO	Not required by state law. Follow your written policy or contract, and apply it consistently.
Paid sick leave	No statewide paid sick leave law. Check city and county rules, and federal contractor rules (Executive Order 13706) if they apply.
Paid family leave	No state paid family leave program. The federal FMLA gives eligible employees of employers with 50 or more employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave.
Pay transparency	No statewide pay transparency law requiring pay ranges in job postings.
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	Kentucky Labor Cabinet: https://elc.ky.gov

What trips up Kentucky employers

- ☐ Paid 10-minute rest breaks are required for every 4 hours worked.
- ☐ The meal period must start between the 3rd and 5th hour, not at the end of a shift.
- ☐ Cities can't set their own minimum wage after a 2016 state Supreme Court ruling.
- ☐ 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

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