

15 Understand Basic Employee Rights and Protections

TRANSITION OBJECTIVE

Students will read and understand basic employee rights and protections.

RELEVANCE TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

It is important to know and understand employee rights and protections. These include fair wages, worker's compensation, unemployment insurance and job safety.

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

❑ STEP 1: Update Journal

My rights as a student are . . .

❑ STEP 2: Convene Roundtable

"If I had no rights I would feel ____."

❑ STEP 3: Advance Organizer

"Today you will learn about your rights and protections as an employee."

❑ STEP 4: Activity - 15 Minutes

Divide the class into "lead groups," consisting of three students each and assign one section of the three-page handout to each group in an even distribution. "Lead groups" take responsibility for reading their section and answering the eight questions at the end of the section.

❑ STEP 5: Activity - 10 Minutes

"Lead groups" prepare to teach their section to the class. If more than one "lead group" has the same section, combine the "lead groups" into one larger group to prepare their "lesson presentation." The "lead group" is responsible for teaching the information in their section. They also direct the class to write answers to the eight questions on individual handouts.



CAREER MANAGEMENT: Unit 3 LESSON 15

Employee Rights & Protections

Section 1: Fair Wages

Fair Wages
Employees have the legal right to expect their employers to pay them regularly. Most employees are paid with a weekly check. The employee can expect deductions to be taken out of their check. These include state, federal, and social security taxes. Employees are required to give a wage statement with each pay check. The statement shows gross wages, tax deductions, hours worked, hourly rate and any other deductions. If an employee is not paid on time, he/she may contact the Department of Labor.

Employees are entitled to worker benefits to which the employer has agreed. Benefits are listed in the employee manual. These might include sick leave, vacation time, personal leave, medical coverage, meals, or employee discounts. It is important to consider benefits when choosing a job. Benefits are not required by law. Be especially careful to look for a job with such benefits as medical insurance.

Employee pay cannot be lower than the local minimum wage. This can vary from state to state and city to city. Many employers are required to pay a wage equal to others in a similar position. To check for a fair wage, compare the starting pay for a job with two companies. Employees are also entitled to over time pay if they work over 40 hours per week. Overtime pay is usually one and one-half times the regular pay.

1. How are employees usually paid?
2. What deductions are taken out of an employee's pay?
3. What employee benefits are required by law?
4. What benefits do you want to have provided by your employer?
5. What is the lowest wage you can be paid on a job?
6. How can you find out the fair wage for a job position?
7. What is the overtime pay for a person who makes \$8.00 per hour?
8. Why is it important to have laws that protect employees?

© Used by permission of the James Starfield Company, Santa Barbara, CA 93103 THE TRANSITION CURRICULUM
170



CAREER MANAGEMENT: Unit 3 LESSON 15

Employee Rights & Protections

Section 2: Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment Insurance
Unemployment insurance is protection for workers who lose their job through no fault of their own. For example, if a company shuts down, employees are entitled to unemployment benefits. Employees are required to pay for unemployment insurance.

An employee who loses a job should go immediately to the unemployment office listed in the phone book. The person should bring the following documents: social security card, a picture ID, credit card, insurance card, voter registration card and paycheck stubs for the last year.

Workers must wait at least one week after applying before collecting their benefits. Benefits are available for a limited time and the payment is usually about half the person's wages. While receiving these benefits, the employee must look for work. They just show that they are actively filling out applications and interviewing for job positions. To collect unemployment insurance, the employee must have worked at least 20 weeks in the last year and earned a specific amount.

If a person is fired from a job, they usually are not eligible for unemployment insurance unless there are unusual circumstances. For this information, check with the unemployment office (usually called EDD or the Employment Development Division) in your area. Anyone may contact this office in person, by phone or online for help finding a job or to get more information about these benefits.

1. When is a person entitled to unemployment insurance?
2. Who pays for unemployment insurance?
3. How does a person apply for unemployment insurance?
4. What is the usual unemployment insurance payment?
5. How long can a person receive unemployment insurance payments?
6. When can a person who is fired collect unemployment payments?
7. Where should an employee go to collect unemployment insurance?
8. Do you think unemployment insurance is an important benefit? Why?

© Used by permission of the James Starfield Company, Santa Barbara, CA 93103 THE TRANSITION CURRICULUM
171

❑ STEP 6: Activity - 20 Minutes

Starting with the first section, *Fair Wages*, the “lead group” takes five minutes to teach the information. Have students write their answers to the eight questions on individual handouts. The “lead group” checks the answers. Repeat this process with “lead groups” for each of the remaining two sections: *Unemployment Insurance* and *Workers’ Compensation*.

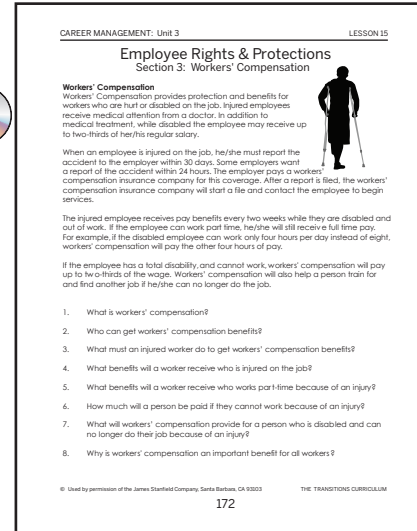
❑ STEP 7: Evaluate Outcomes

“Two important rights I will have as a worker are _____ and _____.”

❑ STEP 8: Connecting Activity

Have students use math skills to compute the following:

1. Calculate a yearly salary based on 34 hours per week at \$8.00 per hour/or current minimum wage.
2. Calculate “Unemployment Wage” or 1/2 of the salary in #1.
3. Calculate “disability wage” or 2/3 of the salary in #1.



KEY WORDS

unemployment

insurance

compensation

benefits

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

- Student Handouts: **Employee Rights & Protections**, pages 170-172.
- Prepare for the reading activity.
- Prepare for the group presentations.
- Provide screen images of handouts or a chalkboard for presentations.

SCANS FOUNDATION SKILLS

- Basic Academic Skills: Reading, Speaking, Listening, Math
- Thinking Skills: Creative Thinking, Knowing How to Learn
- Personal Qualities: Responsibility, Sociability, Self-Management