

Welcome to the Employment New Zealand newsletter. Here you will find the latest news and information about employment rights and responsibilities.



### **COVID-19** reinfection advice updated

The Ministry of Health has updated its advice around possible reinfection with COVID-19, in light of increasing evidence that reinfections can occur earlier than 90 days.

The new advice states that if a person develops new COVID-19 symptoms, and it has been 29 days or more since their previous infection, it is possible that it is a reinfection with COVID-19, and they should take a rapid antigen test (RAT). This differs from the previous advice, which was that people should not re-test if they had tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days.

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#### Focus on Fair Pay Agreements – who might they apply to?

The proposed Fair Pay Agreement system aims to bring together employers and unions in an industry or occupation to bargain for binding minimum terms and conditions for *all* employees across that industry or occupation. The size of the business does not matter, and the employees do not need to be union members – a fair pay agreement would apply to them all regardless.

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Labour Inspectorate enforcement yields \$313k

Enforcement action by the Labour Inspectorate has recovered wage arrears and penalties in excess of \$313,000 from the owner of the Dunedin-based Romeeco Bakery, following a decision by the Employment Relations Authority (ERA) in November 2021. The case has sent a clear message to businesses who exploit their workers that they will face severe penalties, and these will be strictly enforced.

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#### **Employment agreements made easy**

Need help creating employment agreements (contracts) for your staff? Why not try the <u>Employment Agreement Builder</u>? This tool allows you to draft a variety of employment agreements to meet your business needs. Employment agreements are a legal requirement for all your employees – and a great foundation for a healthy, constructive working relationship.

### **FIND OUT MORE**



#### What is meant by 'good faith'?

The requirement to act in 'good faith' is central to all dealings between employees, employers and unions. What this means is spelled out in legislation – however, it's about more than just following the letter of the law.

Good faith means that employers and employees should work together in a way that respects each other's role, and be open, honest and communicative with each other. For example, from an employer's perspective it means they need to consult at all times when an employee's employment may be affected; from an employee's perspective it means they should comply with all reasonable requests by the employer to supply information relevant to their role. The obligation lasts throughout the employment relationship and includes collective bargaining.

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### Know your rights and responsibilities

If you are unsure of your employment rights or responsibilities, our Employment Learning Modules are there to help you. These free interactive learning modules provide an overview of what's required by law of employers and employees.

The latest module – <u>An introduction to your employment obligations</u> – is ideal for employers keen to know more about employment law. We also have a basic module for employees, <u>An introduction to your employment rights</u> – which is available in English, Te Reo Māori, Samoan, Tongan, Simplified Chinese, Hindi, Korean, and Tagalog.

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MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT

New Zealand Government