

Employee Rights Why We Should Support Them

Author: Carl Tapi . October 2020

Most of us spend most of our lives working this means that *employee rights*, such as freedom of association, the right to strike, the prohibition of slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour, and the right to fair and just working conditions, are vital. When employers treat their workers with respect, the workplace can be a place of self-fulfillment. When they treat workers with contempt, however, it turns into a site of exploitation and humiliation.

Employee Rights is a broad term used to describe the range of legal protections that are afforded to individuals and groups that are in the employ of business organizations. *Employee rights* can be broken down into four primary categories: rights relating to labor union organizing and collective bargaining; rights relating to working hours and pay; rights relating to workplace safety and workers' compensation; and rights relating to discrimination in hiring or in the workplace.

Fundamental *employee rights* are thus a significant factor in a wide range of human resource management issues that businesses face today. Contemporary *employee rights* were established primarily through legislation, much of which was itself triggered by societal changes. Workers also secured rights through collective bargaining, but these rights were themselves established largely through legislation.

Fundamental Employee Rights in the Workplace

A few workers' rights are codified in international treaties protecting civil and political rights, such as the right to form and join trade unions. Other workers' rights, including the right to work, strike or have fair and just working conditions.

Employee rights is a sometimes-blurry term in today's business environment, as changing demographics, increased emphasis on individual rights in other areas of society, increased demand for educated workers, and changes in corporate management philosophies have all contributed to uncertainties about its exact dimensions. The constitution and labor legislation provides the following basic *employee rights*:

- Employees have the right to work in a safe environment.
- The right to membership to Trade Unions or a Workers Committee.
- The right to the prohibition of forced labour.
- The right to protection against discrimination.
- The right to fair labour standards.
- The right to democracy in the workplace.

Labour practices and standards must be fair. Put simply, they must promote the full dignity of the

worker. Essentially, the employer wants productivity and client-oriented services but must not mortgage the employee to the workplace in a manner that dehumanises him. Doing so is an affront to the constitutional objectives that we agreed as Zimbabweans.

Employment laws were put in place to protect workers from wrongdoing by their employers. Without those statutes, workers would be vulnerable to many threats. By law, your employer is responsible for making sure:

- Your work environment is safe and providing appropriate protective equipment if necessary.
- Workers are free from discrimination and bullying.
- You receive all your entitlements in terms of pay and conditions.

As a worker, you are responsible for:

- Understanding the conditions of your employment. This includes knowing your rate of pay, working hours and entitlements to breaks and leave.
- Work in a way that is not harmful to the health and safety of yourself or others.
- Knowing what to do if you think your employer is not meeting their responsibilities.

Make sure that you:

- Understand the conditions of your employment. This includes your rate of pay, working hours and your entitlements for breaks, leave and public holidays
- Know your rights regarding discrimination and bullying. Know what to do if you experience or witness this in your workplace
- Know the health and safety requirements of your workplace. Know how to maintain a safe environment for yourself and others
- Have access to all of the appropriate safety gear and equipment. Know what to do in the event of an accident
- Know where to get help on workplace health and safety issues relevant to your state or territory.

To know your *employee rights* and responsibilities, understand the conditions of your employment, and where to get information when you need it.

Rights Afforded to Job Applicants

Job applicants also have certain rights even before being hired as an employee. Those rights include the right to be free from discrimination based on age, gender, race, national origin, or religion during the hiring process.

Conclusion

The importance of *employee rights* as established by law is difficult to overstate. Employees are afforded the protection of law regarding their remuneration, safety, and fairness. Beyond that, the laws create the

means of educating workers about their rights and responsibilities and provide the means of taking action when violations are noted.

The laws are intended to benefit employers as well. The right of an employer to hire and fire employees at-will is confirmed by law. Operational ambiguities are reduced by establishing clear-cut legal expectations along with guidance materials to assist employers in meeting their responsibilities.

The benefits extend well beyond the workplace. Our society is made more decent and humane by establishing norms that restrict child labor, reduce work-related injuries and diseases, and provide mechanisms for fair treatment of the nation's workforce.

Carl Tapi is a Consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, a management and human resources consulting firm. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/carl-tapi-45776482/> Phone +263 (242) 481946-48/481950 or cell number +263 772 469 680 or email: carl@ipccconsultants.com or visit our website at www.ipccconsultants.com

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