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# NEWSLETTER

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## WHAT'S NEW IN EMPLOYMENT LAW?

### ANNUAL INCREASE IN COMPENSATION LIMITS

New limits on awards for unfair dismissal and redundancy come into effect from February 05. The increase applies where the event giving rise to compensation occurs on or after 1 February 2005.

The new limit for unfair dismissal rises to £56,800 from £55,000, and a week's pay for the purposes of redundancy rises to £280 per week from £270.

### WORKING TIME LIMITS

Employers must ensure that workers do not work more than an average of 48 hours per week or more than 60 hours in any one week. There is no opt out of the weekly limit. Working time includes driving, loading, assisting passengers to board or disembark, cleaning and maintenance of vehicles and waiting periods where the duration is not known in advance.

### RECORD KEEPING AND ENFORCEMENT

Employers must keep records for 2 years and inform employees of their responsibilities to provide information

## EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION CHANGES DUE

### Work at Height Regulations. Due early 2005

Designed to reduce the number of workplace accidents from a height. Learn more at:  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutuse/hsc/meetings/2004/121004/c04114c.pdf>

### New information and consultation regulations

From 6<sup>th</sup> April 2005 new Information and Consultation Regulations (still in draft form) come into force. They will give employees working in large organisations rights to be informed and consulted about changes to the organisation that may affect them. (*See 10 tips*)

### IMPLICATIONS

From this date undertakings with 150 or more employees will be required to put into place mechanisms for informing and consulting employees if requested to do so by at least 10% of their employees. The provisions will be extended to undertakings with 100 or more employees in 2007, and 50 or more employees in 2008.

### Increase in SMP, SPP, SAP and SSP rates

With effect from April 2005 the government has announced new standard rates for the above from £102.80 to £106.00 per week (or 90% of average weekly earnings if less) with the threshold increased to £82.00

### Employer supported childcare

From 5th April 2005 employees will be able to receive up to £50 per week childcare, which can be paid in the form of vouchers as long as an approved child carer is used. This is free from tax and national insurance for the employee and employer

### STOP PRESS - National Minimum Wage increase from Feb 05 to £5.05 for workers aged 22 & over

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