

Employment Laws Overview

Employment Laws Overview – Study Notes

1. Purpose & Scope

Aspect	Description
Goal	Protect workers' rights, ensure fair labor practices, and balance employer? employee relations.
Coverage	Applies to most private?sector employers, public agencies, and employees (full? time, part?time, temporary, and some independent contractors).
Jurisdiction	Federal statutes (U.S.) set baseline; state and local laws may add or expand protections.

2. Core Federal statutes (U.S.)

Law	Year Enacted	Key Protections	Who Enforces
Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)	1938	Minimum wage, overtime pay, child? labor standards, record?keeping	Wage & Hour Division, DOL
Title VII of the Civil Rights Act	1964	Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin	EEOC
Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)	1967	Protects workers 40+ from age? based discrimination	EEOC
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	1990	Requires reasonable accommodations; bans disability discrimination	EEOC & DOJ
Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)	1993	Up to 12 weeks unpaid leave for serious health conditions, birth/adoption, military caregiver	DOL (OSHA)
Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)	1970	Workplace safety standards, right to a safe work environment	OSHA

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Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)	1994	Protects service?member employment & reemployment rights	DOL
Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA)	1974	Governs employee benefit plans (pensions, health)	DOL & PBGC
National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)	1935	Collective bargaining, protects concerted activities, union formation	NLRB
Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act	1988	60?day notice for mass layoffs/plant closures	DOL

3. Common Legal Themes

Theme	Typical Requirements	Typical Violations
Minimum Wage & Overtime	\$7.25 federal (higher in many states); 1.5× hourly rate after 40 hrs/week	Misclassifying employees as “exempt”; failing to keep accurate time records
Anti? Discrimination	Equal opportunity in hiring, promotion, compensation, termination	Harassment, disparate impact, failure to accommodate
Leave & Benefits	Eligible employees: 12 weeks unpaid FMLA; paid sick leave in many states	Denying leave, retaliation for taking leave
Workplace Safety	Provide safe conditions, training, PPE, hazard communication	Ignoring OSHA citations, inadequate reporting of injuries
Union Rights	Employees may organize; employers must bargain in good faith	Interfering with organizing, unlawful retaliation
Employee Classification	Correctly label as “employee” vs. “independent contractor”	Misclassification to avoid taxes/benefits

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4. State & Local Add?Ons

Area	Typical State Enhancements
Minimum Wage	Many states set rates above the federal floor; some have scheduled increases.
Paid Sick/Paid Family Leave	California, New