



2014 Payroll Fact Sheet

Employee Scheduling: Four Day Work Schedules Pros & Cons

Converting from a regular five day work schedule to a four day compressed workweek schedule requires serious considerations. Under a compressed workweek work schedule, employees work approximately 40 hours in less than five days. The most common compressed work schedule is the 10-hour, four days per week schedule. Another arrangement is called 5-4/9. In this arrangement, employees work one week of five nine-hour days followed by one week of four nine-hour days.

It's important to recognize the pros and the cons of a four day work week and whether or not it would effectively maximize your business potential.

Pros:

- It's possible for employees to maintain full time income while still regularly enjoying more than two days off a week.
- Due to the extended work day, employees will generally avoid rush hours and their commutes will be less of a hassle.
- Reduce energy costs, employees' commuting time and gasoline expenses.

Cons:

- Nine to ten hour working days can be especially tiresome, both mentally and physically on employees.
- The schedule may not match the workload, thus productivity may suffer. For example, if your business is required to open 5 days a week, you may not have the same number of people working everyday if they all must work an average of 40 hours each week. On three days of the week, you may have twice the number of people working than on the remaining two days.
- Unproductive shift overlap in 24/7 operations. If your business operates continuously, you will need three 10-hour shifts to cover a 24 hour period, creating significant overlap between the shifts. While some of that overlap can be useful, the overlap is essentially wasted if you have more people than required.
- Long work hours make it difficult for after work activities.
- Union and labor rules may prohibit implementing a four day work week.
- For employees with children it may be difficult to locate adequate child care support.

Implementing a four day work week should be debated thoroughly as the long hours can lead to employee discontent. However, many employees who have experienced a four day workweek enjoy the extra whole day off for rest and relaxation. The nature of some businesses (i.e.: service industry) may make it impossible to implement a four day workweek.