

Expense Reimbursement

Employers are obligated to reimburse their employees for expenses they incur in carrying out their duties. If the employers fail to do so, they can be held responsible for the expense costs, interest and attorney' fees. Employers who require their employees to use their personal vehicle to perform their duties. Costs that employers are responsible for include training costs, telephone charges, postage, photocopying, office supplies, and other costs that result in performance of work duties.

California law requires that employees be paid for all hours worked, including travel time other than commute time from home to the place of employment. Compensable time includes time in which an employee is required to travel in an employer's vehicle.

Examples of Work-Related Expenses

Uniforms

When employers require uniforms to be worn by employees as a condition of employment, that uniform must be provided and maintained by the employer. The term "uniform" includes wearing apparel and accessories of distinctive design or color. Ordinary work clothes are not considered uniforms when the employees have free choice of what to wear. When the employer specifies the design or color or requires that an insignia be affixed, it is considered a uniform. White nurses' uniforms and black and white uniforms for service personnel need not be supplied to employees by the employer, as these uniforms are standard in their industries and can be used from one job to the next. Employees may be asked to maintain employer-furnished uniforms when the uniforms require minimal time for care, e.g., uniforms made of a material requiring only washing and tumble or drip drying. Employers must maintain or provide a maintenance allowance for uniforms requiring ironing or dry cleaning, or uniforms requiring special laundering for heavy soil, or requiring patching and repairs due to the nature of the work. Where an employer does not provide a uniform allowance, an employee may be entitled to reimbursement for costs incurred for maintenance. An employer who is required to furnish personal protective clothing or equipment must also pay for that equipment.

Tools & Equipment

If an employer requires an employee to have certain tools or equipment, or if such tools are required to perform the job, the employer must provide and maintain them. However, any employee who is paid at least twice the minimum wage, may be required to provide and maintain hand tools and equipment customarily required by his or her trade. Exceptions may apply to apprentices, beauty salons and barbershops.