

The Right to Disconnect Policy

The health and wellbeing of our employees is of the utmost importance to us and, we as a company, encourage and support our employees in prioritizing their own wellbeing. Disconnecting from work is vital for a person's wellbeing as well as sustaining a good work-life balance.

The company recognizes that every employee has the right to, and should, disconnect from work outside of their normal working hours unless there is an emergency or agreement to do so for example while "on-call".

What does the Right to Disconnect mean?

The Right to Disconnect refers to, "an employee's right to be able to disengage from work and refrain from engaging in work-related electronic communications, such as emails, telephone calls or other messages, outside normal working hours".

Needs of the Business

Naturally there may, on occasions, be legitimate situations when it is necessary to contact colleagues/ clients/ customers outside of normal working hours, including but not limited to;

- Checking availability for rosters,
- To fill in at short notice for a sick colleague,
- Where unforeseeable circumstances may arise,
- Where an emergency may arise,
- Where business and operational reasons require contact out of normal working hours.

Although everyone should be mindful of the right to disconnect, it is important that we are also mindful that situations can arise where it is not possible to deal with matters during normal working hours.

Employer's Obligation

- Provide employees with information on their working time

- Ensure employees take rest periods, in accordance with the ESA
- To not penalize an employee for acting in compliance with this policy and any relevant provision or performing any duty or exercising any right under ESA

Employee's Obligations

- Ensure you manage your own working time while at work, take reasonable care to protect your safety, health and welfare and the health and safety of co-workers.
- To fully cooperate with any time recording methods which the company use in order to record working time including when working remotely.
- To be mindful of fellow colleagues', customers'/clients', and all others, right to disconnect (e.g., by not routinely emailing or calling outside normal working hours)
- To notify your manager, in writing, of any statutory rest period or break you were unable to receive on a particular occasion and the reason for not receiving such rest period or break,
- Be conscious of your work pattern and aware of your work-related wellbeing and taking remedial action if necessary.

Role of Management

As managers have most interaction with their employees, it is important they ensure the employees within their team are able to disconnect from work outside of normal working hours. Should an employee have concerns surrounding their working time or is unable to disconnect from work, it is important that this is brought to the attention of the Manager in order to try to resolve any concerns.

Managers should be mindful of times emails are sent and should they notice that a member of their team is sending emails at odd hours or are logging in excessively, they should speak to the employee as soon as possible, as this may indicate they are finding it difficult to manage their workload during normal working hours.

Communications

It is important all employee's personal time is respected, and everyone has the right to disconnect from work outside normal working hours. Therefore, where possible, e-mails etc. should be checked and/or sent only during normal working hours, whilst also appreciating that where work patterns differ, some employees may send communications at a time which is inconvenient to another i.e., where one employee works during the weekend and another does not. Where this is the case, the sender should give consideration to the timing of their communication and understand that the recipient will not be expected to respond until their return to work.

Where a manager sends communications outside normal working hours, unless business and operational needs dictate that an immediate response is required, employees should not feel the need to respond to communications received outside normal working hours.

Handheld Devices

Some employee's depending on their role, may be provided with handheld devices such as mobile phone, laptop, tablet etc.. It is important to be aware that these are provided to employees to allow flexibility in how such employees complete their work. This does not imply that the employee makes themselves available for work at all times.

Raising Concerns

Should an employee have any issues in exercising their right to disconnect, they should raise this with their line manager immediately in order to resolve the issues on an informal basis.