

Employment conditions

Clarify with the agencies and the intermediary the conditions of employment before heading to Germany:

- transportation and placement costs
- accommodation and catering costs
- payment options and terms
- medical insurance.

There is the possibility of not contributing to the social insurance system if you work as a short-term employee during the harvesting season. Otherwise your employer must pay for the social insurance in Germany.

Employment contract

The employment contract must be in written form and contain the following information:

- name and address of both employer and employee
- job and task description
- beginning date and term of employment
- amount of wages and payment deadline
- working hours
- number of leave days
- advance notice periods for termination of employment
- references to collective agreements that might apply to your contract.

Do not sign documents you don't understand!

Ask for the help from people who speak German or contact the advisors in the counseling centers in order to understand the content of your employment contract.

Working schedule

During the harvesting season you can work maximum 70 days as non-professional employee, depending on the amount of working days per week.

You can work up to 48 hours in six days per week. You are entitled to payment of all hours you worked for, including overtime hours.

Write down all your hours, breaks, the number of boxes or kilograms you harvested and document your daily work. Gather proof and witnesses for your work, as they might help you in case of discrepancies between the payment and the amount of work you have done.

Wage payment

The minimum wage of 12 € starting October 2022 is also valid for seasonal employees. Piece wage – for every harvested kilo or box – is allowed, but it mustn't undermine the legal minimum wage per hour.

The wage is usually paid on the 15th, at the latest at the end of the following month.

Wage payment may also be fulfilled at the end of the employment contract in the harvesting season. In this case, ask for a monthly interim billing, so that you can keep track of your work.

You are entitled to pay slips that specify the amount of hours you worked, the gross wage and the deductions for accommodation and catering, if the latter is offered by the employer.

Accommodation and catering

You must clarify if the accommodation and the catering will be provided directly by your employer.

If these services are provided by an agency or another person than the employer, then you will have to receive a lease contract for the accommodation and a service contract for the catering.

Orienting figures for monthly deductions from wage for the offered services:

- catering: 9 € per day for three meals, i.e. maximum 270 € per month
- accommodation prices differ according to the number of persons per room, e.g. 241 € (one person/room), 144,60 € (two persons/room), 120,50 € (three persons/room).

Medical insurance

Seasonal workers who do not surpass 70 working days per year on the German labor market, can benefit from medical insurance in Germany if they can prove the existence of social insurance in their country of origin. This proof can be done through the certificate "A1". If you work longer than 70 days, then you will have to be registered for the social insurance services in Germany.

When opting for a temporary health insurance abroad, please make sure that this is valid in Germany and it covers the costs in the event of illness and medical treatment.

Work accident

Seasonal employees benefit from insurance in case of accidents at the workplace or occupational disease. The employer must cover the costs for such insurances. In case of accident, this must be declared as an accident which occurred at the workplace both to the employer and to the attending physician.

If you are in incapacity for work, you are entitled to wage payment during the illness, if you have been working more than four weeks in the same workplace.

Termination of the employment contract

Both notice of termination and resignation must be given in writing. Also the advance notice period must comply with the stipulations in the employment contract.

If you have received a notice of termination and you discover some infringements, contact a counseling center as soon as possible, so that you can get help within the legal deadline to object the abuse.

Please note! If the wage and overtime hours are not remunerated, if you notice improper working and lodging conditions, if you are involved in an accident at the workplace or get unjustly fired, contact the counseling centers to get help!

For better protection it is recommended to join the trade union. In your case, the responsible trade union is the IG BAU, department forestry and agriculture. We can help you find the office in your proximity!

Free counseling and help to enforce your rights as workers:

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Information for seasonal workers in agriculture

Counseling centers for workers from the European Union in Dortmund and Düsseldorf

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