



**SECTOR
PUBLICATION
JSC 149.04**

METAL TRADE

CBA 2025-2026

INTRODUCTION

Employers and trade unions in your sector recently negotiated with the aim of improving working and pay conditions for workers.

Not everyone started from the same position since employers received generous gifts from the government such as a relaxation of restrictions on night work, the introduction of more overtime hours with no bonus, no possibility of increasing wages, etc. And while large companies are raking in huge profits, the wage norm law hinders free collective bargaining and, as a result, our wages.

The difficulty of reaching sector agreements is clear. It took a lot of effort to secure an increase in meal vouchers for those who receive them.

Despite the narrow bargaining margin, we, together with the other trade unions, finally managed to reach an agreement, the details of which are set out in this sector publication. You will find detailed information on working and pay conditions in your sector. Please note: this publication reflects the situation at the time of writing. To find all the latest updates, please check our website: www.acvcsc.be.

Enjoy the read!

ACV-CSC METEA

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REMUNERATION

INDEXATION

In the metal trade sector, actual and scale wages are being indexed each year on 1st February. At this time, wages follow the 'real inflation'. To determine the real inflation on 1st February, the indexation rate from January is compared with the one from January of the previous year.

Specifically, wages increased by 3.65% on 1st February 2025 and by 2.04% on 1st February 2026.

Please note: The automatic pay indexation mechanism currently in place in your sector is under significant pressure from the government and employers. At the time of writing, it is unclear whether any action will be taken.



Scan this QR code to find out more about current wages.

SALARY INCREASE

The wage norm is the percentage by which wages may increase, in addition to automatic indexation. Social partners can negotiate it every 2 years.

The percentage level is set out in the wage norm law. This law is meant to prevent the wages in Belgium from rising faster than in neighbouring countries.

The wage norm for 2025-2026 is zero per cent. This means that we have not been able to negotiate a collective pay rise in addition to automatic indexation.

ACV-CSC METEA continues to campaign against this wage norm law, as it prevents free negotiations over wages from taking place.

ECO-VOUCHER

Any full-time worker is entitled to a total of EUR 250 a year in the form of eco-vouchers.

The eco-vouchers are paid in one instalment on 15 June at the latest. The reference period runs from 1st June of the previous year until 31st May of the current year.

The eco-vouchers are given according to the work carried out during the reference period. If the worker has not worked during this period, the following are possible assimilations:

- Every day of suspension for which a wage or holiday pay has been paid.
- Every day of temporary unemployment.
- The entire period of maternity leave.
- 30 days of sick leave or incapacity for work following an (industrial) accident, in addition to the guaranteed monthly wage.

A pro rata adjustment is applied in all cases where work is incomplete during the reference period.

Regarding eco-vouchers, interim workers are entitled to the same amount as permanent workers working in the same company.

A collective bargaining agreement (CBA) can, at any time, be concluded within a company to plan an alternative use for these eco-vouchers.

For more information on eco-vouchers, please visit www.myeccocheques.be.

TRANSPORT COSTS

The amount of the employer's contribution for public transport and private means of transport can be found on our website.



Scan this QR code to find out more about current transport costs.

Public Transport

The costs of public transportation between your home and your workplace are fully reimbursed.

Private Means of Transport

If a worker uses their own vehicle to travel to work, including walking, they receive a daily allowance (per diem). Private means of transport refers to all possible means of private transportation. This allowance is indexed each year on 1st February.

Bicycle Allowance

From 1st July 2026 onwards, a bicycle allowance of EUR 0.32 per kilometre really travelled will be given to workers who travel at least partially by bike, up to a maximum of 40 kilometres (round trip) per workday.

This allowance can never be lower than the daily allowance for private means of transport.

Further than 40 kilometres per workday, the daily allowance is applied.

END-OF-YEAR BONUS

The end-of-year bonus equals to a 13th month or:

$$\frac{\text{Hourly wage as of 31st December} \times \text{Weekly working time} \times 52}{12}$$

Reference period: from 1st January of the year until 31st December.

Payment period: first salary after 31st December.

Some leaves are treated as actual work under certain circumstances:

- Maternity and childbirth leave.
- (Industrial) accident and (occupational) disease: up to the first 12 months.
- Temporary unemployment: up to 150 days.
- Prophylactic leave.
- Adoption leave and foster parent leave.
- Leave for medical care: up to 3 months per blue-collar worker, per reference period.
- Palliative care leave.

The blue-collar worker is entitled to a full bonus if, during the past year, they:

- retired,
- died.

A worker who has not yet attained one year of seniority as of 31st December will receive a twelfth of an end-of-year bonus per month of work/assimilated period of time (pro rata adjustment). A month begun is considered a full month of work. Blue-collar workers with a fixed-term contract, a contract for clearly defined work, a temporary contract or a replacement contract are also entitled to an end-of-year bonus with a pro rata adjustment.

The blue-collar worker is entitled to a pro rata adjustment of his end-of-year bonus regardless of how the contract is terminated, except in the following cases:

- Dismissal for urgent reasons.
- Resignation of a blue-collar worker with less than 3 years of service in the company.

SHIFT WORK AND NIGHT WORK BONUS

The base wage of blue-collar workers working in shifts (morning and/or night shift) increases by 10%.

Shift work means:

- When teams follow each other without a break or, if they are not consecutive, when they do their daily work at the same time for a maximum of 2 hours.
- When the team is made up of at least 2 workers.
- When the consecutive teams are made of a similar number of workers.

The base wage of blue-collar workers working by night (between 8.00 pm and 6.00 am) increases by 20%.

Please note: as from 1st June 2026 (based on the information available at the time of publication) some companies of the JSC 149.04 are permitted to only pay the night work bonus to new workers between 11.00 pm and 6.00 am.

Conditions:

- New workers taking up post after 1st June 2026.
- If the company performs one of the following activities at night:
 - Retail trade, if this is carried out partially or entirely online.
 - Wholesale trade.
 - Logistical activities for third parties.
 - E-commerce.

However, employers are not required to comply with this legislation and may choose to grant a night work bonus from 8.00 pm onwards to this group of workers. To do so, a CBA must be concluded at company level. The 2025-2026 sector agreement contains a recommendation to this effect.

The granting of the shift work and the night work bonus at sectoral level does not preclude the maintenance of more favourable arrangements at company level.

SEPARATION ALLOWANCE

Blue-collar workers sleeping outside of their home because of their work are granted a separation allowance of EUR 18.80 per night, except if they receive something more favourable at company level.

STAND-BY REGULATIONS

Two types of allowances are provided for stand-by blue-collar workers:

- Stand-by allowance: intended to compensate for the time during which the worker is 'on call' and therefore at the employer's disposal to respond to a call.
- Leave allowance: when the blue-collar worker must respond to a call, he receives this allowance.

A blue-collar worker who must carry out actual work during their stand-by period receives their normal wage. The actual work time is seen as work time.

The amount of the stand-by allowance depends on when the worker is 'on call'. Since 1st February 2026, the sums are as follows:

- Monday to Friday
 - 6.00 am – 10.00 pm: EUR 2.34 per hour
 - 10.00 pm – 6.00 am: EUR 3.14 per hour
- During the weekend
 - 6.00 am – 10.00 pm: EUR 3.14 per hour
 - 10.00 pm – 6.00 am: EUR 3.94 per hour

The leave allowance depends on the number of times the blue-collar worker is called to do some work. Since 1st February 2026, it amounts to:

- EUR 39.36 for 1 call per calendar day.
- EUR 62.97 for 2 calls per calendar day.
- EUR 78.71 for 3 calls per calendar day.
- + EUR 7.89 per extra call per calendar day.

These allowances are indexed annually on 1st February.

It is possible to deviate from the amounts, if a CBA has been concluded at company level.

The worker who asks for it is entitled to a resting period of 11 hours between a call and the start of their normal work schedule.

SECTORAL PENSION FUND

Since 1st January 2002, all workers from the metal trade sector are entitled to a supplementary pension in addition to their state pension, except for companies where they organise themselves a pension fund.

Therefore, the advantages of this sectoral pension apply to each and every worker who has ever been employed by a company in this sector, regardless of the nature of their contract (permanent or fixed-term, full-time or part-time, etc.). Students and temporary workers are excluded from this.

The employer's contribution to this sectoral pension fund represents 2.1% of gross wages. The worker does not need to take any action in this regard.

For more information:
Sefocam NPO – Sefoplus Pension Funding Organisation
av. du Marly 15/8, 1120 Brussels
Tel: 02 761 00 70
E-mail: helpdesk@sefocam.be
www.sefocam.be

SUBSISTENCE FUND

The Social Fund (Sefocam) pays supplementary allowances on top of some allowances. All allowances have been indexed by 6.58% on 1st February 2026, except for the contribution for childcare expenses and the pregnancy bonus. A new indexation will be negotiated for the 2027-2028 social agreement.

Those allowances are not automatically paid but have to be requested. Sefocam can also go back 3 years for an allowance.



Visit www.sefocam.be for the correct procedures and to find the relevant documents.

SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCE IN CASE OF TEMPORARY UNEMPLOYMENT

In the event of temporary unemployment, Sefocam provides an additional allowance on top of the standard unemployment benefits. The allowance amounts to EUR 16 per day of unemployment benefit and EUR 8 per semi-day of unemployment benefit.

Conditions:

- Receive legal unemployment benefits.
- Work in a company from the sector at the time of unemployment.

SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCE IN CASE OF FULL UNEMPLOYMENT OR FOR AN OLDER UNEMPLOYED PERSON

Sefocam provides a supplementary allowance in the event of full unemployment and for an older unemployed person.

Full unemployment

Conditions:

- Be under 55 when the unemployment starts.
- Perceive legal unemployment benefits.
- Have at least 5 years of service in a metal sector at the time of dismissal.

Since 1st July 2015, this allowance has come to an end.

Under some extraordinary cases, it remains possible to receive this allowance. Here they are:

- If the termination of the contract is not the consequence of a unilateral termination from the employer (ex. at the end of a fixed-term contract or a clearly defined task, in case of medical force majeure, etc.).
- If the blue-collar worker has been dismissed after 1st January 2014 as part of a collective dismissal started before 31st December 2013.

The supplementary allowance amounts to EUR 8.24 per day of unemployment benefits and to EUR 4.12 per semi-day.

Older unemployed person

Duration:

Until legal retirement.

Conditions:

- Receive legal unemployment benefits.
- Have at least 20 years of service, with at least 5 of them within the sector.
- Be at least 55 on the first day of unemployment.

Since 1st July 2015, this allowance has come to an end.

Under some extraordinary cases, it remains possible to receive this allowance. Here they are:

- If the termination of the contract is not the consequence of a unilateral termination from the employer (ex. at the end of a fixed-term contract or a clearly defined task, in case of medical force majeure, etc.).
- If the blue-collar worker has been dismissed after 1st January 2014 as part of a collective dismissal started before 31st December 2013.

The supplementary allowance amounts to EUR 8.24 per day of unemployment benefits and to EUR 4.12 per semi-day.

SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCE IN CASE OF ILLNESS

For incapacity for work which started before 1st July 2019

In case of standard illness or accident, the blue-collar worker is granted, after at least 60 days uninterrupted of incapacity (except for occupational disease or industrial accident), a supplementary allowance from Sefocam.

Conditions:

- Work for an employer of the sector the illness begins.
- Perceive legal sickness benefits.

Amount (from 1st January 2024):

- EUR 122.59 after the first 60 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 122.59 after the first 120 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 180 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 240 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 300 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 365 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 455 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 545 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 635 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 725 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 815 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 905 days of incapacity uninterrupted.
- EUR 159.63 after the first 995 days of incapacity uninterrupted.

For incapacity for work which started after 1st July 2019

In case of standard illness or accident, the blue-collar worker is granted, after at least 30 uninterrupted days of incapacity (except for occupational disease or industrial accident), a supplementary allowance from Sefocam, during maximum 36 months.

Conditions:

- Work for an employer of the sector when the illness begins.
- Perceive legal sickness benefits.

Since 1st January 2024, this allowance amounts to:

- EUR 3.08 per full sickness benefits.
- EUR 1.54 per semi-sickness benefits.

The supplementary allowance in case of illness must also be paid during maternity leave.

Older sick person

Blue-collar workers aged 55 or over permanently incapacitated as a consequence of a disease or an accident (except for occupational disease or industrial accident) receive from Sefocam, as older sick people, a daily allowance on top of the sum paid by the health insurance company, and this until they reach their pension.

Conditions:

- Be at least 55 on the first day of the incapacity.
- Perceive legal sickness benefits.
- Have completed a waiting period of 30 calendar days.
- Be able to prove 20 years of service, among which 5 years within the sector.

This allowance was indexed by 16.13% on 1st January 2024 and now amounts to:

- EUR 10.49 per sickness benefits.
- EUR 5.25 per semi-sickness benefits.

SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCE IN CASE OF COMPANY CLOSURE

In the event of company closure, blue-collar workers are entitled to a supplementary allowance paid by Sefocam. In addition, a supplement is provided for each year of seniority. Workers now receive a EUR 408.10 supplementary allowance in case of company closure. This sum increases by EUR 20.56 per year of service (for a maximum of EUR 1,346.07 in total).

Conditions:

- Be at least 45 years old at the time of closure.
- Have at least 5 years of seniority with the company at the time of closure.
- Not have started work elsewhere within 30 days of being made redundant.

SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCE IN CASE OF HALF-TIME TIME CREDIT

A worker aged 53 or over who benefits from a time credit receives a monthly allowance on top of the ONEM/RVA/LFA allowance for 60 months.

This EUR 102 allowance is granted by Sefocam.

SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCE IN CASE OF END-OF-CAREER EMPLOYMENT (1/2 AND 4/5TH)

In the event of end-of-career employment from the age of 60, where working hours are reduced by 1/2 or 1/5th, Sefocam pays an additional monthly allowance on top of the ONEM/RVA/LFA allowance.

When a blue-collar worker who can prove a long career or heavy occupation starts time credit after their 55th birthday, Sefocam pays them an additional monthly allowance on top of the ONEM/RVA/LFA allowance.

The Sefocam monthly allowance comes to EUR 102.01 when working hours are reduced by 1/2, and EUR 40.79 when reduced by 1/5th. This applies until 31st December 2027 (on the understanding that workers who are already using this scheme retain their acquired rights until they reach the statutory retirement age).

SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCE IN CASE OF RCC/SWT/SAB

If you have joined an unemployment scheme with company supplement, you are entitled to a supplementary allowance of at least EUR 7.71 per day.

- The calculation is based on an average of 26 unemployment benefits per month.
- This supplementary allowance is assimilated to half the difference between the net reference wage and the unemployment benefits.

Re-employment

Under certain conditions, workers made redundant as part of their RCC/SWT/SAB retain their entitlement to a supplementary allowance paid by Sefocam.

In this case, we recommend informing your ACV-CSC service centre that this is indeed a new job with a different employer!

CONTRIBUTION FOR CHILDCARE EXPENSES

From 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2023, blue-collar workers receive a contribution for childcare expenses for childcare happening in 2022 and 2023, under the following conditions:

- For children up to 3 years.
- EUR 4 per child and per day, for a maximum of EUR 400 per child and per year.
- The facility must be registered with the Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance (ONE) or Kind & Gezin.
- Contribution based on the tax certificate.
- The reimbursement request must be submitted before 31st December 2027.

From 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2025, blue-collar workers receive a contribution for childcare expenses of EUR 5 per child and per day, for a maximum of EUR 500 per child and per year:

- For children up to 14 years.
- The facility must be registered with the ONE or Kind & Gezin. This also applies to holiday camps.
- Contribution based on the tax certificate.
- The reimbursement request must be submitted before 31st December 2029.

Between 1st January 2026 and 31st December 2027, the reimbursement comes to EUR 5.35 per day and per child, for a maximum of EUR 535 per child and per year. The request must be submitted before 31st December 2030.

Pregnancy Bonus

Between 1st January 2026 and 31st December 2027, female blue-collar workers can request a EUR 300 pregnancy bonus to Sefocam. This request must be submitted in 2026 or 2027 with a medical certificate from the general practitioner or the gynaecologist attesting the pregnancy and the estimated due date.

CONTRIBUTION FOR A SMOOTH END-OF-CAREER

Since 1st January 2026, blue-collar workers aged 58 or over (*) are entitled to a gross monthly allowance of maximum EUR 201.58 to compensate for lost salary in the following cases:

- Switching to an alternative function.
- Appointment as a buddy as part of a buddy project.
- Switching from shift work or from night work to day work.
- Switching from full-time work to a 4/5th regime.

(*) To switch from full-time work to a 4/5th regime, you need to be at least 60.

CONTRACTS

NOTICE PERIOD

Unique Status

Since 1st January 2014 there is no distinction between blue-collar and white-collar workers anymore with regards to notice periods (unique status). The notice period is determined by seniority within the firm. For new contracts starting after 1st June 2026, the notice period is set to maximum 52 weeks.

For those with less than 6 months of seniority, the notice period will be set to one week. This measure was not yet known at the time of publication.

Since 1st January 2014, the following notice periods are in force:

Seniority	Dismissal by the employer (in weeks) (sen. = 0 on 01/01/2014)	Resignation by the worker (in weeks) (sen. = 0 on 01/01/2014)	Counter notice by the worker after dismissal by the employer (in weeks)
0 < 3 months	1	1	1
3 months < 4 months	3	2	2
4 months < 5 months	4	2	2
5 months < 6 months	5	2	2
6 months	6	3	3
9 months	7	3	3
1 year	8	4	4
1 year 3 months	9	4	4
1 year 6 months	10	5	4
1 year 9 months	11	5	4
2 years	12	6	4
3 years	13	6	4
4 years	15	7	4
5 years	18	9	4
6 years	21	10	4
7 years	24	12	4
8 years	27	13	4
9 years	30	13	4
10 years	33	13	4
11 years	36	13	4
12 years	39	13	4
13 years	42	13	4
14 years	45	13	4
15 years	48	13	4
16 years	51	13	4
17 years	54	13	4
18 years	57	13	4
19 years	60	13	4
20 years	62	13	4
21 years	63	13	4
22 years	64	13	4
23 years	65	13	4
24 years	66	13	4
25 years	67	13	4
26 years	68	13	4
27 years	69	13	4
28 years	70	13	4
29 years	71	13	4
More than 30 years	+ 1 week for each year of service started	13	4

The maximum notice period for a worker who resigns is 13 weeks. These rules apply to all workers regardless of their status on 31st December 2013.

Another regulation applies to workers who started before 1st January 2014 and are dismissed by their employer. Their rights are 'locked'. In concrete terms, this means that in this case their notice period consists of two parts:

- 1st part: the notice period based on seniority and the rules applied before 31st December 2013.
- 2nd part: the notice period shown in the table above and based on the seniority from 1st January 2014 until dismissal.

According to their seniority in the firm on 31st December 2013, acquired rights from before 1st January 2014 are 'locked' based on sectoral arrangements in force at the time.

Seniority	General system		(Early) retirement
	Worker	Employer	Employer
< 5 years	14 d	40 d	28 d
5 - 9 years	14 d	48 d	28 d
10 - 14 years	21 d	70 d	28 d
15 - 19 years	21 d	105 d	28 d
20 - 24 years	28 d	140 d	56 d
> 25 years	28 d	154 d	56 d

d = calendar days

To calculate the notice period of blue-collar workers who have been working there since before 1st January 2014 and get dismissed by their employer:

Locked rights on 31st December 2013 (1st part) +
seniority from 1st January 2014 until dismissal (2nd part)

A compensatory allowance has been introduced for blue-collar workers who were employed before 2014 were made redundant after 1st January 2014. This regulation aims to compensate for the previous disparity between the notice periods for blue-collar and white-collar workers. Since 2017, everyone is entitled to compensatory redundancy pay (CRP).

The period covered by the CRP is determined by the following formula: (a) - (b) + (c)

(a) = Notice period as if the blue-collar worker had always worked within the new system.

(b) = Locked rights on 31st December 2013.

(c) = Notice period based on seniority from 1st January 2014 until dismissal.

The worker must request their CRP to the payment agency. They are advised to always do so, even if they do not become unemployed and will therefore not file for unemployment benefits.

The CRP may be claimed immediately after the end of the notice period or after the period covered by severance pay. In any case, it must be claimed within 6 months of the end of the relevant period.

The CRP is paid by the ONEM/RVA/LFA through the payment agencies. It is a net allowance (thus exempt from ONSS/RSZ/LSS and withholding tax). This CRP cannot be combined with unemployment benefits. In case of medical RCC/SWT/SAB, the right to CRP is also open.

Example:

Blue-collar worker JSC 149.04

Started work: 12 January 1994

Dismissed: 12 February 2026

(a) Full seniority = 32 years => 74 weeks (see new notice periods).

(b) Notice period for a blue-collar worker within JSC 149.04 until 31st December 2013 = 15 weeks.

(c) Notice period from 1st January 2014 until 12 February 2026 = 39 weeks.

This worker therefore receives a 54 weeks' notice (to work or the employer pays a severance pay) on top of a net compensatory redundancy pay of 20 weeks (= 74 weeks - 54 weeks).



Thanks to our calculation tool, you can also calculate your notice period yourself.

Suspension of the Notice Period

Some events can suspend the notice period. In these cases, the notice period either does not start or is put on hold. Suspension of the notice period is only possible when the employer dismisses their worker. If the worker resigns, the notice period is never suspended.

CONCERTATION IN CASE OF MULTIPLE DISMISSAL

In order to proceed with a collective dismissal, the employer must have informed the relevant bodies and held the necessary consultations to avoid dismissals. They must, among other things, check that all measures to preserve employment such as temporary unemployment and professional training, have been exhausted.

If this procedure is not scrupulously followed, the employer will have to, on top of the normal notice period, pay a sum equal to two times the notice period.

Multiple dismissal is understood as the dismissal of at least:

- 2 blue-collar workers in firms with 8 blue-collar workers or less,
- 3 blue-collar workers in firms with 9 to 17 blue-collar workers,
- 4 blue-collar workers in firms with 18 to 22 blue-collar workers,
- 5 blue-collar workers in firms with 23 to 28 blue-collar workers,
- 6 blue-collar workers in firms with more than 29 blue-collar workers,

and within a period of 60 calendar days.

TEMPORARY AGENCY WORK

Companies in the metal trade sector may only use one-day contracts when it is an absolute necessity. This must relate to a task for which it is known, before the start of the assignment, that it will last for fewer than 5 consecutive working days.

BUILDING UP SENIORITY

Workers keep the seniority acquired during fixed-term and temporary agency work contracts when they later receive a permanent contract.

MEDICAL CONTROL

The employer can always get an advisory doctor to check whether a worker is really incapacitated. The employee is obliged to submit to this assessment.

The law states that a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) (whether sectoral or company-wide) or the staff regulations may specify a 'period of availability'.

This period of availability is a time slot during for which the worker must be available to the advisory doctor, at their home. This slot of maximum 4 consecutive hours must take place between 7.00 am and 8.00 pm.

In the metal trade sector, no CBA has been signed to set this period of availability. If there is no CBA at company level and no relevant clause in the staff regulations, the worker has thus the right to leave their home if their medical certificate allows it.

If your employer wants to introduce clauses on the subject in the staff regulations, we advise you to contact your ACV-CSC METEA secretariat. They will provide you with all the necessary information.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

Since 28 November 2022, the requirement to provide a medical certificate has been partially removed. Until the end of 2025, you could choose not to provide your employer with a medical certificate for your first day of incapacity for work, up to three times per calendar year. From 2026 onwards, this remains possible twice a year. This exemption applies to both a single day of absence and to the first day of a longer period of absence. Companies with fewer than 50 workers may derogate from this rule, provided that a CBA or an amendment to the staff regulations is in place.

Even though a medical certificate is no longer required up to twice a calendar year, the following principles still apply:

- You must always notify your employer immediately of your incapacity for work, using the usual means.
- You must provide a medical certificate proving your incapacity if your employer asks for it, except on the first day of incapacity for two separate illnesses.
- If you are staying somewhere other than your usual place of residence, you must inform your employer immediately. This ensures that medical control remains possible (see above).

- The work regulations are the main document for finding out more about the rules that apply in your company. You should therefore make sure you consult your company's work regulations.

Relapse after Work Resumption

A new regulation came into effect on 1st January 2026: after each period of illness for which guaranteed wage has been granted, there is a relapse period of 8 weeks. Previously, this period was 14 calendar days. If, as a worker, you fall ill again with the same illness during the relapse period, your employer is not obliged to pay you the guaranteed wage or the remaining part of it.

If you relapse during your period of gradual return to work, the conditions above do not apply to you. In this case, you receive immediately sickness benefits from your health insurance company, and you will not be entitled to a guaranteed wage.

Illness and Temporary Unemployment

If you are or fall ill during a period of temporary unemployment, you will only receive guaranteed wage for the days on which you were scheduled to work. For days on which you were not scheduled to work and for which you are temporarily unemployed, you must submit a request to your health insurance company. You will receive sickness benefits for those days.

CAREER

CAREER LEAVE

Every blue-collar worker is entitled to:

- 1 day of career leave per year from the year in which they reach the age of 50.
- A 2nd day of career leave per year from the year in which they reach the age of 55.
- A 3rd day of career leave per year from the year in which they reach the age of 58.
- A 4th day of career leave per year from the year in which they reach the age of 60.

Subject to any more favourable provisions at company level.

A pro rata adjustment of the days of career leave is applied in case of part-time work.

SENIORITY LEAVE

Every blue-collar worker is entitled to:

- 1 extra day off each year when they reach 5 years of service in the company.
- A 2nd day off each year when they reach 10 years of service in the company.

Subject to any more favourable provisions at company level.

A pro rata adjustment of the days of seniority leave is applied in case of part-time work.

UNEMPLOYMENT SCHEME WITH COMPANY SUPPLEMENT (RCC/SWT/SAB)

In theory, access to most schemes is no longer possible. This was decided by the government agreement. The only type of scheme still possible is for those aged 58 with at least 35 years of service, and for less valid workers and workers with serious health issues.

In certain circumstances, it is possible to request an exemption from the requirement to be available for work.

TIME CREDIT AND END-OF-CAREER EMPLOYMENT

Time Credit with Reason

- Reduction by 1/5th for 51 months for all reasons (interprofessional regulation).
- Half-time or full-time time credit for 51 months with the reason being taking care of a minor child seriously ill or of a disabled child under 21 years old (interprofessional regulation).
- Half-time or full-time time credit for 36 months with the reason being taking care of a child under 8 years old, palliative care, taking care of a member of the household or of the family seriously ill and training (sectoral regulation). It is possible to extend this period to 51 months to take care of a child under 8, for palliative care, to care a member of the household or of the family seriously ill through a company CBA.

If you wish to take time credit with reason, you must meet certain requirements. These include, among others, having a certain level of seniority within the company, working on a specified part-time basis, etc. Furthermore, these conditions vary depending on the reason for and type of leave (full-time or part-time). Therefore, before submitting your application, we advise you to seek further information from the trade union representative in your company or from the ACV-CSC specialised departments.

End-of-career Employment

4/5th and half-time end-of-career employments are available from the age of 55 for those in physically demanding jobs (with 25 years of service) and for those with long careers (with 35 years of service).

If you wish to start end-of-career employment, you must meet certain conditions. These include, among others, a certain amount of seniority within the company, a minimum number of years of service, etc. End-of-career employment can also have an impact on your retirement (for ex. if you stop working before reaching the legal retirement age).

Before submitting your request, we advise you to seek information from the union representative in your company or the ACV-CSC specialised departments.

Flemish Job Bonus

Flemish job bonuses still apply. This is a supplementary allowance that you can receive, subject to certain conditions, alongside the ONEM/RVA/LFA allowance when taking time credit, parental leave, palliative care leave, medical assistance leave, or close relative caregiver leave.

SHORT-TERM ABSENTEEISM

Blue-collar workers from the metal trade sector are entitled to take time off work, whilst retaining their normal pay, for family events or to fulfil certain civic duties or civil obligations as listed below.

Wedding

- Wedding of the worker as well as the official filing of a cohabitation agreement: 3 days, to be chosen by the worker during the week of the event or the following week.
- The day of the wedding, for the wedding of:
 - A child of the worker or their spouse,
 - A child consistently brought up by the worker,
 - A sibling,
 - A sibling-in-law,
 - Their father or mother,
 - Their grandfather or grandmother,
 - Their father-in-law or mother-in-law,
 - Their stepfather or stepmother,
 - A grandchild,
 - A sibling-in-law of the worker's spouse,
 - Any other relative of the worker. However, they must live under the same roof as the worker.

Birth Leave

Every worker is entitled to take time off work when their child is born. Since 2023, this has been brought up to 20 days regardless of the worker's work regime (full-time or part-time). These days must be taken within 4 months of the birth date.

During the first 3 days of birth leave, the worker keeps receiving their full wage from their employer. For the remainder of the birth leave, the worker must request an allowance from their health assurance company (the allowance equals 82% of the capped gross wage).

Adoption Leave

Recently improved

A worker who adopts a minor child into their family is entitled to an individual right of up to 6 weeks of adoption leave. Adoption leave has been extended in recent years.

Until 31st December 2026 adoption leave is extended by 4 weeks. From 1st January 2027 onwards, these additional weeks will increase to 5. These additional weeks come on top of the individual right but are to divide between both adoptive parents.

The individual right to 6 weeks can be doubled if the child has a physical or mental disability.

The individual right can be extended by 2 weeks if several minor children are adopted simultaneously.

During the first 3 days of adoption leave, the worker keeps their wage. For the remainder of the leave, they receive a benefit paid by the health insurance company.

Death

- Death of the spouse, of a child of the worker or their spouse, of a child brought up by the worker or a child placed in long-term care at the time of death or in the past: 12 days among which 5 are to be chosen by the blue-collar worker within 30 days from the day before the death and 7 are to be chosen by the worker within the year following the death.
At the blue-collar worker's request and with the employer's consent, exceptions may be made to the periods during which these days off must be taken.
- Death of the father, the mother, the father-in-law, the stepfather, the mother-in-law or the stepmother of the worker: 5 days to be chosen by the worker within 30 days from the day before the death.
- Death of the foster father or foster mother of the worker placed long-term in a foster family at the time of death: 3 days to be chosen by the worker between the day of the death and the day of the funeral.
- Death of a placed child (for a short-term stay at the time of death) of the worker or their spouse: 1 day to be taken by the worker the day of the funeral.
- Death of a sibling, a sibling-in-law, a grandparent, a great grandparent, a grandchild, a great grandchild, a son-in-law or a daughter-in-law living with the worker: 2 days to be chosen by the worker between the day before the death and 30 days after the funeral.

- Death of a sibling, a sibling-in-law, a grand-parent, a great grandparent, a grandchild, a great grandchild, a son-in-law or a daughter-in-law not living with the worker: the day of the funeral.
- Death of any other relative living under the same roof as the worker, the guardian of the underage worker or of the minor child of whom the worker is the guardian: the day of the funeral.

Miscellaneous

- Solemn communion or secular party for a child of the worker, an adopted child or a child raised by the worker: 1 day free to choose.
- Attendance at an officially convened family council meeting: the time required, up to a maximum of 1 day.
- Serving on a jury, being summoned as a witness before the courts or appearing in person as ordered by the labour court, acting as a polling station official during local, provincial or parliamentary elections (for federated entities, at federal or European level): the time required, up to a maximum of 5 days.

JOB APPRAISAL

Every blue-collar worker is entitled, at least once every 5 years, to a job appraisal with their employer.

WORKING TIME AND FLEXIBILITY

The Arizona government has relaxed some rules when it comes to flexibility, to the detriment of workers.

VOLUNTARY OVERTIME

Until 31st March 2026, there were two types of voluntary overtime hours:

- Voluntary overtime: subject to a written agreement between the employer and the worker, a worker could work up to 100 hours of overtime per year. These overtime hours were paid with a bonus but there was no compensatory time off.
- Relance hours: an extra 120 hours of voluntary for which a written agreement between the employer and the worker was also required. There was no bonus or compensatory time off and they were paid on a gross=net basis.

Relance hours have been abolished after 31st March 2026.

From 1st April 2026, there will be 360 hours of voluntary overtime:

- 240 hours with no bonus (gross=net, no compensatory time off),
- 120 hours with bonus (no compensatory time off).

A written agreement between employer and worker is still required. This agreement is valid for one year with a tacit renewal.

INTERNAL LIMIT

The internal limit is set to 143 hours. This limit is intended to prevent workers from accumulating excessive overtime hours. Once this limit has been reached, the worker cannot exceed the weekly working time. And this applies as long as the overtime hours have not been paid or compensated (time off).

Please note: until 31st March 2026, the first 45 hours of voluntary overtime were not taken into account when calculating the internal limit. Since 1st April 2026, voluntary overtime is no longer considered when calculating the internal limit.

The reference period for the compensatory time off has been brought up to 1 year.

The number of overtime hours per calendar year – worked as a result of an exceptional increase in workload or due to unforeseen circumstances – increased from 91 to 143 hours. Workers may choose either to compensate these overtime hours or to be paid for them in cash.

TAX-FAVOURABLE OVERTIME

Until 1st January 2026, the global quota for tax-favourable overtime was 130 hours per year and per worker. This quota was temporarily brought up to 180 hours in recent years. The government now intends to set it permanently at 180 hours of tax-favourable overtime for overtime carried out after 1st January 2026. We must now wait for the legislation that will enshrine these regulations in law.

FLEXI-JOBS

Since 1st July 2026, flexi-jobs will be available in all sectors. Therefore, it will become possible to have a flexi-job in any sector as long as you meet the conditions (for example having worked at least 4/5th time during the quarter preceding the flexi-job).

The 2025-2026 sector agreement recommends that workers wishing to take up a flexi-job must possess the required skills and safety certificates for the role.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Training Plans

Every company with 15 workers or more draws up each year a training plan that takes into account both the company's needs and the qualifications of its workers. For companies with less than 15 workers it is not an obligation, but the social partners recommend making one. Each year, the Works Council (WC), the Union Delegation (UD) or the staff reviews and approves this plan. Every year, the training plan must be communicated to Educam before 15 February. The implementation of this plan is done in collaboration with Educam.

Since 1st January 2014, a company training plan must be approved by every trade union represented in the company.

Moreover, if a change is made to a company training plan that had previously been approved in the company, the new plan must be approved again by the WC or, in the absence of it, by the UD.

The report from the WC must mention that the training plan has been discussed during the WC.

By request of the union delegation, Educam may be invited. Educam will come at least once every 4 years to a WC or a Committee for Prevention and Protection at Work (CPPW).

Training Clause for Training Courses Regarding a Bottleneck Occupation

An employer may enter into a training clause with a worker who, during the term of their employment contract – and at the employer's expense – undertakes a training programme of a certain scope.

Such a training clause stipulates that the blue-collar worker must reimburse part of the costs if they leave the company before the end of the agreed period.

Training during Working Time

Both the training itself and the preparation for it must take place during working hours. Only if this is not possible, and on a voluntary basis, may the training take place outside working hours. In this case, the worker may choose either to take compensatory time off for these training hours or to be paid for them.

The employer must cover the cost of the training, including travel expenses.

TRADE UNION REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE COMPANY

The threshold required for a union delegation remains 15 blue-collar workers.

In companies with at least 50 workers, social elections must be organised to appoint a CPPW. In companies with at least 100 workers, they must also elect a WC. These bodies allow workers to play a more active role in the employer's policies. Employers must also comply with certain very specific rules.

When an employer wishes to recruit blue-collar workers with a fixed-term contracts, interim workers or subcontracts, he must inform the WC, UD or the trade unions in advance.

The duty to provide information also applies to employer associations, which means that companies which set up an employer association or join such an association must inform the WC, the UD or the trade unions in advance.

UNION ADVANTAGES

UNION BONUS

Every member of ACV-CSC METEA working in a metal or textile sector is entitled to a union bonus.

In the metalworking sectors, this union bonus is the same for all members. The amount and eligibility criteria are set each year. In 2025, the bonus amounts to EUR 130 for members who have paid membership fees as full-time active workers.

Special rules apply to those who have just left school, those who are ill, etc.

ACV-CSC METEA NEEDS YOU

ACV-CSC METEA is a powerful national industrial trade union. Members and representatives are the ones making our organisation so strong.

Being a member brings nothing but benefits:

- We protect your interests.
- Our information is clear and accurate.
- You can come to us with your questions, in complete confidence.
- Our representatives are always available. They care about your concerns.
- If bargaining is not enough, we jump into action.
- And if needed, we go to the labour court.



What's more, you can also save quite a bit of money on your holidays and leisure activities by showing your membership card to our partners. Find out more at www.quedesavantages.be.

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