

Qatar Employment Laws (2025): A Complete Guide to Qatar Labour Laws



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Qatar is one of the most prosperous economies in the Middle East. The state's rapidly growing economy attracts foreign workers, creating a complex labor market for Qatari and foreign workers. To keep its employment infrastructure transparent, employee-friendly, and as competitive as Western economies.

The primary legislation that all employers must be aware of is the Qatar Labour Law. Qatar has made significant amendments to its labor laws in recent years to align with international standards and improve the working conditions for both local and foreign workers. The focus of this guide is to cover the Qatar employment law amendments that employers must be aware of in 2024.

Understanding Qatar Labour Law

The Qatar Labour Law is a comprehensive framework designed to regulate the relationship between employers and employees within the country, which lays the foundation for the legal rights, responsibilities, and constraints that workers, employers, and workers' committees have.

Employers and employees are required to follow the Qatar Labour Law, and both parties should be aware of their rights and obligations.

The Qatar Labour Law is governed by [Law No. 14 of 2004](#), which sets out the rules and regulations for employment in Qatar. The law covers various aspects of employment, including working conditions, wages, leaves, termination of employment, and employee benefits.

Now, we will look at the most essential elements of the Qatar Labour Law.

Employment Contracts in Qatar

Employment contracts in Qatar are legally binding agreements between employers and employees that outline the terms and conditions of employment. All employers must provide their employees with employment contracts or an official letter of employment detailing the terms of work. While employers can draft employment contracts in English, the Qatar Ministry of Labour only recognizes the official version of the Arabic contract.

These contracts are crucial as they clarify and prevent disputes by clearly defining both parties' roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

Types of Employment Contracts in Qatar

In Qatar, there are primarily three types of employment contracts allowed:

- **Fixed Term Contracts**

These contracts are for a specific duration, generally up to 5 years. It can include the probation period, after which the termination is based upon mutual agreement. The employer must pay compensation and benefits if the employee disagrees with the termination.

- **Indefinite Term Contracts**

Employment under indefinite contracts allows employers to hire employees for an indefinite period. These contracts do not have a specified end date and continue until either party terminates the agreement. Any party can terminate the employment without giving any reason. However, if the employee has been working for the employer for less than five years, they must provide a one-month notice, and if they have been working for more than five years, a two-month notice must be given before leaving the job.

- **Job completion**

Casual work contracts or job completion contracts are the temporary contracts that should not exceed 4 weeks but they can be extended for the same time if both parties agree. This contract is unlike indefinite term contract that does not have any expiration date and can be terminated only by the contracted parties.

An Employment Contract Must Include

- Name of the employer and place of employment
- Name of employee, qualifications, address, nationality, place of residence and identity proof
- Contract type
- Date and place of signing the contract
- Job description
- Probation period
- Starting date of the contract
- Leave entitlement and benefits
- Duration in case of a fixed term contract
- Payment method, salary, payment intervals

Key Provisions of the Act

Under Qatar labour laws, employees are provided benefits and protection from working conditions that employers must know. For instance, employees can work up to six days a week or more than 10 hours daily.

Here are the key provisions of the act:

Restrictive Covenants

Restrictive covenants are clauses that can be included in employment contracts that restrict an employee's actions after the term of employment. These clauses prevent ex-employees from competing with their employers for a specified period. Employers can also use restrictive covenants to prohibit employees from using any information about clients or deals gained during employment.

While restrictive covenants are similar to a non-compete contract, they can last up to two years. Under the current labour law in Qatar, non-compete agreements cannot last more than one year.

Notice Period

The notice period is the time frame an employee or employer must provide before terminating an employment contract. Previously, the standard notice period was one month for employees who have worked for the employer for up to 5 years and two months for those who have worked for more than five years.

Under the new labour laws, employees working for less than two years must serve one month's notice, while those working for the same employer for more than two years must serve two months' notice.

Sick Leaves

Under the updated Qatar Labour Law, employees are entitled to sick leave if they work for more than three weeks for their employer and can provide a medical certificate by an authorized physician. Employees can take up to 14 days of paid sick leave annually. If the sickness extends beyond 14 days, employers are not entitled to pay for sick leaves.

Employee Protection in Qatar

Qatar labour rules also provide employee protections under the amended laws. Here are the significant protections offered:

Working Hours and Weekends

The standard working hours in Qatar are 48 hours per week, with a maximum of ten hours per day. Employees are entitled to one day off per week, usually on Fridays. However, during the holy month of Ramadan, working hours are reduced to six hours per day or 36 hours per week.

Employees are entitled to overtime pay for working more than 10 hours daily. The overtime pay rate must be at least 25% more than the regular wage rate for day hours and 50% higher for night hours.

Minimum Wage

The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (MADLSA) regulates the minimum wage in Qatar. As of 2024, the new minimum wage is QAR 1,000 per month, along with QAR 500 housing allowance and QAD 300 for food. Additional allowances must be provided to foreign workers if the employer does not offer these.

Working Hours and Overtime

According to Qatar Labour Law, the standard working hours are 8 hours per day and 48 hours per week. Any work beyond these hours is considered overtime and must be compensated accordingly. The law permits extending daily working hours to 10 hours only if the additional 2 hours are treated as overtime and compensated at a rate not less than 125% of the regular wage.

Regulations for Overtime Work

Employees are entitled to additional compensation for overtime work, calculated at 125% of their regular hourly wage. Employers should provide a day off and compensation at 150% of the regular hourly wage for working on holidays.

Rest Periods and Breaks

Employees are entitled to rest periods during their working hours. After every five consecutive hours of work, a break of at least one hour must be provided. This break is not included in the calculation of total working hours. Additionally, employees should have a weekly rest day, usually Friday, unless otherwise agreed.

Main Rights and Obligations of Workers in Qatar

The 2024 updates to the Qatar Labour Law underscore the country's dedication to ensuring the rights and well-being of its workforce. This section highlights the legal protections and the specific rights afforded to workers.

Anti-discrimination Laws

There exists no specific law in Qatar addressing discrimination at work. There is mention in the legislation that there should be no discrimination or unfair treatment based on race, gender, religion, nationality, or disability. However, the QFC Employment Regulations 2019 provide more precise protection against workplace discrimination.

However, positive discrimination in favour of Qatari nationals is permitted.

Health and Safety Regulations

Qatar places a high emphasis on health and safety in the workplace. Employers must provide a safe working environment, conduct regular safety training, and ensure all safety equipment is available and in good condition.

Qatari citizens are covered by a national health insurance scheme. Expatriates must either receive health insurance from their employers or, if self-employed, purchase insurance independently.

Rights of Foreign Workers

Foreign workers make up a significant portion of the workforce in Qatar. The updated labor laws provide better protection for expatriate workers, ensuring they receive the same rights and benefits as Qatari nationals. This includes the right to change jobs without requiring a no-objection certificate from their current employer, a significant step towards improving labor mobility and reducing dependency on employers.

Annual Leave and Holidays

Employees in Qatar are entitled to paid annual leave, with the duration depending on their length of service. After one year of continuous service, employees are entitled to three weeks of paid annual leave. If they work more than five years for the same employer, they can take up to 4 weeks of paid leave annually.

Additionally, there are eight public holidays for which employees are entitled to 3 leaves for Eid El-Fitr, three for Eid Al-Adha, one for Independence Day, and one for National Sports Day.

Social Security and Health Insurance

The 2024 amendments to the Qatar Labour Law introduce mandatory health insurance for all employees. Employers must register their workers with the General Retirement and Social Insurance Authority (GRSIA) and contribute to their social security. Additionally, they must provide health insurance coverage, ensuring access to medical care for all workers.

Termination of Employment

Termination of employment is a critical aspect of Qatar labour law. Understanding regulations regarding ending the working relationship between an employer and an employee is essential.

Termination of Definite Term Contracts

Definite-term contracts can be terminated upon the expiry of the contract term or by mutual agreement between the employer and employee. If either party wishes to terminate the contract before its expiry, they must provide a valid reason and adhere to the notice period requirements. If an employer terminates a definite-term contract before its expiry without a valid reason, the employee may be entitled to compensation equivalent to their wages for the remaining period of the contract, as stipulated in the Labour Law.

Termination of Indefinite Term Contracts

Either party can terminate indefinite-term contracts without giving any reason. Employees must serve a one-month notice period if they work for the employer for less than five years. Otherwise, they must serve a two-month notice period.

Disciplinary Termination

Employers have the right to terminate an employee for disciplinary reasons, such as misconduct or violation of company policies. The disciplinary termination must follow a fair and transparent process, allowing the employees to defend themselves before deciding.

Termination Due to Force Majeure

Termination due to force majeure, such as natural disasters or other extraordinary events, is permissible under the Qatar Labour Law. The event must be “beyond the control of the parties, have been unforeseeable at the time the agreement was entered into” for force majeure.

As Qatari law doesn't stipulate what constitutes force majeure, employers must specify in the contracts which events will be considered force majeure for termination.

End of Service Benefits and Entitlements

Employees in Qatar are entitled to end-of-service benefits upon the termination of their employment. The Qatar labour law for gratuity requires employers to pay three weeks' wages each year as gratuity if the employee has worked for less than five years. For more than five years, the employee must receive a gratuity of one month's wage for each year worked.

Additional entitlements include:

- Payment of all outstanding benefits and wages
- Compensation for wrongful dismissal, if proven
- Issuance of experience certificate
- Payment of accrued but unused paid leaves
- Provision of a return ticket if the employee is a foreigner and not able to obtain a new work visa within 90 days of the termination date

How can Truein help businesses?

Truein is a comprehensive [time attendance system in Qatar](#) that helps businesses manage their workforce. A cloud-based solution helps companies streamline their attendance, HR, and compliance processes, including time and attendance tracking, [employee scheduling](#), and compliance with labour laws.

Truein can assist businesses in Qatar by ensuring adherence to the updated 2024 labour laws and managing employee record. It offers a complete set of features that are particularly beneficial in maintaining accurate records of working hours and leave entitlements, thereby reducing the risk of non-compliance and enhancing overall efficiency.

Conclusion

The new amendments in Qatar's labour laws significantly improve working conditions and ensure similarity with international labour laws. Employers must familiarize themselves with these new provisions to ensure compliance and take full advantage of the enhanced protections and benefits of the updated rules.

FAQs

Q: What are the main objectives of Qatar's labour law amendments for 2024?

The main objectives of the 2024 amendments are to enhance worker protection, ensure fair wages, and improve working conditions. Ultimately, the new Qatar labour laws must align with international standards. These include protecting against negative consequences for exercising the employee rights, right to undertake parallel employment etc.

Q: How do Qatar's labour laws differ from those of other countries in the region?

Qatar's labour laws emphasize worker rights and protection more than some other countries in the region. Qatar is the first country in the region to follow the non discriminatory minimum wage applying to all workers, from different nationalities, in all sectors, even in domestic work.

Q: Are there penalties for non-compliance with Qatar's labour laws?

Yes, there are penalties for non-compliance in Qatar, including fines and other legal consequences for employers who violate labour laws.

Q: Are there any provisions in the new labour laws addressing workplace discrimination and harassment?

Yes, the QFC Employment Regulations 2019 include stricter anti-discrimination laws and provisions to address workplace harassment. A woman must be paid the same as a man if she performs the same work and should also be provided with the same opportunities when it comes to training and promotions.

Q: How do Qatar's labour laws address issues related to maternity leave and employee parental rights?

The new amendments provide enhanced maternity leave benefits, with female employees entitled to 50 days leave. At least 35 days of maternity leave must be taken after the delivery. If the employee has some pregnancy related health issues, they can take up to a further of 60 days unpaid leave. Employees are also entitled to regular nursing breaks of about an hour for a year from the child's birth.

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