

Texas Business Today

Chairman Joe Esparza
Commissioner Representing Employers

September 2026

Texas Employers,

Welcome to the September issue of *Texas Business Today*!

September is National Workforce Development Month, and I'd like to remind you about the incredible programs and grants the Texas Workforce Commission offers to help train your workforce with the skills you need in your business.

I have consistently heard from employers that their challenge in developing a strong talent pool isn't a worker shortage; it is a skills shortage. TWC is addressing this by fast-tracking training programs that support business expansion.

The [Skills Development Fund](#) is our premier program. It allows employers to partner directly with local colleges to create customized training specifically for new and incumbent workers.

We also offer [Upskill Texas](#) and the [ASCEND Initiative](#) to help employers strengthen their talent pipelines in high-tech sectors like AI, aerospace and advanced manufacturing.

Through programs like [Jobs and Education for Texans](#) (JET), we are funding state-of-the-art equipment for public schools and colleges to ensure that students in career and technical education classrooms are trained with the tools they will actually use in their career.

I encourage every employer to get involved in the workforce system. Whether that's offering internships, apprenticeships, mentoring students, or weighing in on curriculum, employers should have an active role in shaping their future workforce. The more employers engage now, the stronger and more competitive our workforce will be for years to come.

- Joe Esparza



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large loop followed by a horizontal line.

Chairman Joe Esparza
Commissioner Representing Employers
Texas Workforce Commission

Texas Business Minute



[Click here to watch the video](#)



Keeping Accurate Track of Hours Worked

By: Mario Hernandez

Senior Legal Counsel to Chairman Esparza

Paying employees for the work they perform is a critical function of any business. Employers frequently have questions about what constitutes compensable time worked to ensure that employees are being paid properly. For purposes of this article, the word employees refers to non-exempt employees.

Time Spent in Meetings and Training Programs

Do we have to pay our employees during training time? Do we need to pay employees for time spent in staff meetings? Time spent in meetings or training programs are generally compensable. This also means that the time so spent in such meetings or programs constitutes hours worked.

However, there is an exception. The time spent in meetings and training programs would not be compensable if the employer can establish 4 specific criteria:

1. attendance is outside of the employee's regular working hours;
2. attendance is in fact voluntary;
3. the course, lecture, or meeting is not directly related to the employee's job, and
4. the employee does not perform any productive work during such attendance.

See: https://efte.twc.texas.gov/g_meetings_training.html.

Travel Time

Generally, any work-related travel that cuts across the employee's normal workday is going to be considered compensable and therefore, hours worked. However, the normal commute from home to work and vice-versa is not compensable.

There are different types of scenarios that can arise for employees who have to travel as part of their job, including traveling to other locations that include an overnight stay and a special one-day assignment in another city. For more information on this and other travel time related topics, please visit:

https://efte.twc.texas.gov/h_travel_time.html.

Rest Breaks

Rest periods, also known as rest breaks or coffee breaks, of 20 minutes or less are compensable. Accordingly, they must be counted as hours worked. See

https://efte.twc.texas.gov/d_breaks.html.

What is NOT Counted as Hours Worked?

There are some things that do not count towards the total amount of hours worked:

Paid Leave

Hours worked for purposes of determining whether and how much overtime pay is due only includes time that the employee actually spent working. Time that signifies paid leave does not factor into the total amount of hours worked. See:

https://efte.twc.texas.gov/i_hours_worked_no_leave.html.

Meal Breaks

True meal breaks, which are those that are at least 30 minutes or more are not compensable and therefore not included in the total amount of hours worked. Employers should be careful, however. If the employee is still performing job related tasks during the meal break, the break becomes compensable and would need to be added to the total amount of hours worked. See:

https://efte.twc.texas.gov/d_breaks.html.

Why is Accurate Accounting of Hours Worked Important?

One big reason it's important to keep an accurate and careful track of all hours worked is because employers are required to do so for all non-exempt employees. In addition, knowing what constitutes hours worked helps the employer determine whether and how much overtime pay might be due to an employee. For more information, please visit the following link: https://efte.twc.texas.gov/b_recording_working_time.html.

Conclusion

Employers should carefully account for all time worked by their employees. As a result, employers will be in a better position to have accurate recordkeeping of all hours worked, be able to account for any overtime that might be due and ensure that employees are being paid correctly.

For more information about other types of hours worked scenarios, please visit the following link: https://efte.twc.texas.gov/hours_worked_nx_ees.html.



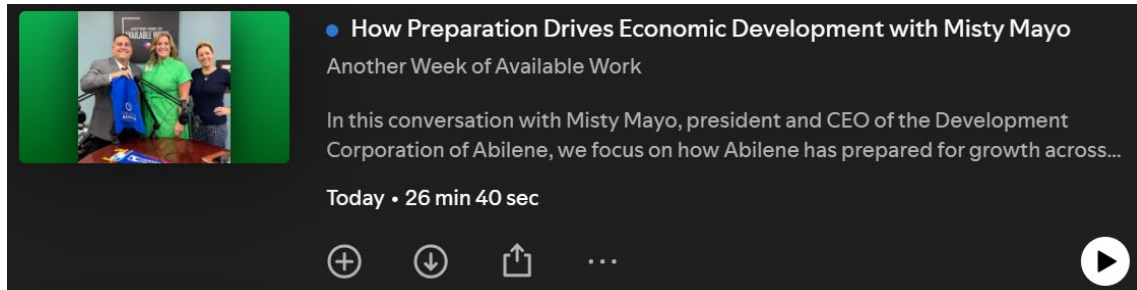
Texas Conference for Employers



- September 18: San Angelo - [Sign Up](#)

[More Info](#)

Another Week of Available Work: A Podcast with Chairman Joe Esparza



How Preparation Drives Economic Development with Misty Mayo

In this conversation with Misty Mayo, president and CEO of the Development Corporation of Abilene, we focus on how Abilene has prepared for growth across industry, workforce, and infrastructure. Misty explains why economic development is a team sport, how legacy companies and new projects are shaping the city's future, and why long-term planning matters. We also discuss how land, buildings, a skilled talent pool and speed to market all influence whether a company chooses a mid-sized city over a major metro. Tune in to learn more about Misty's philosophy: execution is the strategy.

[Click here to listen](#)



Help Fight Fraud

A Quick Response to UI Claims Protects Your Business

When an individual files an unemployment insurance (UI) claim, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) notifies the employer. We need you to respond to these notices quickly to help us prevent fraud. This protects your business.

Response Time Matters



You have 14 days to respond to a UI claim notice, but responding within 48 hours helps us catch fraud fast.

Follow the instructions on the UI claim notice with four ways to respond:

- Online
- Phone
- Mail
- Fax

Step 1: Respond to the UI Claim



Online



Phone



Mail



Fax

Protect Your Business



- Save money; avoid unwarranted charges.
- Ensure accurate UI benefit information for decisions.
- Don't miss the 14-day deadline or you may lose the right to appeal the claim decision.

Step 2: Report Fraud

If the applicant is still working for you and did not file, or never worked for you, notify at [UI Fraud Submission](#). Then respond to the claim at [Employer Response](#).



Resources

- For more information, visit [Employer Notices](#).
- Sign up to receive notices at [Employer Benefit Services](#).

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
Relay Texas: 800-735-2989 (TTY) and 711 (Voice). twc.texas.gov

TEXAS EMPLOYER HOTLINE

1-800-832-9394

Hiring Issues | Medical Leave-Related Laws | Personnel Policies and Handbooks
Independent Contractors and Unemployment Tax Issues | The Unemployment Claims and
Appeals Process | Texas and Federal Wage and Hour Laws



Employer Hotline Hours: M-F, 8am - 5pm

Information provided by employment law attorneys in the Office of the Commissioner Representing Employers at the Texas Workforce Commission

Texas Business Today is provided to employers free of charge

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