



Time reporting

As an employee of a public sector organisation, you are expected to behave honestly and with integrity.

You are paid to perform your role according to your position description and following all applicable codes of conduct. This includes not providing false or misleading information when reporting your work time.

Time reporting as a misuse of public resources

Your time at work, like physical resources, is a public resource. Your work time costs your organisation money in the form of a wage, so you have a duty to accurately record your time and attendance.

Employees who improperly record their time and receive pay for time not actually worked are effectively stealing from the government. Wasting time is another way that resources can be misused.

Any improper use or misreporting of time will contravene the code of conduct at your organisation. This could lead to disciplinary action or even dismissal.

Intentionally misusing resources to benefit yourself or others can amount to serious misconduct and could be subject to criminal penalties.

Misuse of work time

Misuse of work time can include a variety of conduct, such as:

- ▼ falsifying timesheets, travel or accommodation records
- ▼ taking longer breaks than the time permitted or recorded
- ▼ claiming overtime for work that was not done
- ▼ making unapproved use of public resources for private purposes - for example, using time at work to send emails on behalf of your sporting club or interest group, and
- ▼ claiming work time for reading work documents or the newspaper on your regular commute.

Falsifying timesheets

Falsifying timesheets is a serious form of misconduct.

Falsifying a timesheet may be as seemingly minor as 'clocking in' but not actually starting work until later.

It is important to remember that your start time should not be recorded as the time you arrived at work or logged on to your computer, but when you actually began working.

Similarly, your finishing time should be when you actually finish work. This means you shouldn't claim your usual finishing time if, say, you are leaving work early.

It is also considered misconduct if you do not submit accurate leave forms – make sure you follow your organisation's procedures for booking and taking leave.



CASE STUDY

Over a five year period, a manager in the health system in Western Australia claimed just over half a million dollars in overtime payments, on top of her base salary.

She also took 125 days absence without submitting approved leave forms.

The manager was able to bypass official approval processes by exploiting manager inaction and insufficient controls on expenditure from an industry-sponsored research fund.

The Corruption and Crime Commission in Western Australia found there were two cases of serious misconduct and identified associated weaknesses in the payroll systems and other internal controls.

With thanks to Western Australian CCC

<https://www.ccc.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Report%20on%20misconduct%20Orisks%20in%20Health%20Support%20Services%20and%20North%20Metropolitan%20Health%20Service.pdf>

Low productivity

Misuse of work time includes low productivity, which may be caused by:

- ▼ distraction at work, such as overuse of your mobile phone for personal reasons
- ▼ fatigue due to your outside interests, or
- ▼ feeling unwell.

If you are working from home, it may be that:

- ▼ your home technology is impeding your work
- ▼ you are distracted by household chores, or
- ▼ people you live with, including children in your care, are interrupting you.

If you are being paid to work – whether it is in the office or at home – it is your duty to be focused on your work during work hours.

Under-claiming hours

Under-claiming hours worked can also be considered misreporting, even if you think you are doing your organisation a favour. For example, you may have to work more hours than budgeted because you cannot complete a task or project within the allocated timeframe.

Your manager or supervisor needs to know how many hours you are actually working in order to monitor your wellbeing and the demands of your role. It is also important for future project planning and adequate allocation of resources.

What to do if you are not sure

Your organisation has policies and procedures to guide you in making good decisions about the use of public resources, including time reporting. Speak to your manager if you are not sure what to do.



The Commission can help

We are available to provide support and assistance with identifying, reporting, investigating, managing and preventing misconduct: prevention@integrity.tas.gov.au or 1300 720 289.

For more Misconduct Prevention resources go to www.integrity.tas.gov.au/resources