Call-In-Pay Quiz



How Much Call-In-Pay Does the Employee Get?

SITUATION

Mack Karoney, the manager of the hot new Toronto bistro, Eat Or Else, is expecting a huge lunch crowd. To prepare, he asks 5 employees to come in and put in a 4-hour shift during the lunch period. But the day is dampened by the unexpected storm that blows through, closing down the roads and keeping the anticipated lunch crowd home. Employees stand by with nothing to do. After 30 minutes, Mack sees the writing on the wall and sends 2 of the crew home. Both employees earn minimum wage– at the applicable Ontario minimum wage rate in effect at the time.

QUESTION

How much in wages should the 2 employees sent home be paid for the day?

1. The half-hour they actually worked.
2. One hour, since employees can't be paid in half-hour shifts.
3. The "call-in" pay under the Ontario Employment Standards Act–$33.
4. The entire 4-hour shift they were scheduled to work.

ANSWER

C. The employees are entitled to the call-in pay provided by the province's employment standard law–in Ontario, 3 hours at minimum wage, or three hours at the applicable Ontario minimum wage rate.

EXPLANATION

Under employment standards laws, most employees are entitled to a minimum payment each time they show up for work at their employer's request, even if it turns out that there isn't enough work for them to do. This rule protects employees in case unforeseen changes occur after they report to work. The minimum amount is either the hours they actually work or a "call-in" or "minimum daily" amount set by provincial law, whichever is higher. In this case, call-in pay is higher. So C is the right answer. The amount of call-in pay employees are entitled to receive varies by province and territory.

The actual dollar value of this minimum payment varies depending on the current minimum wage rate in Ontario.

WHY WRONG ANSWERS ARE WRONG

1. **is wrong** because the call-in pay amount in this case will be higher than the wages the employees would receive for the hours they actually worked. Explanation: The employees are making the minimum wage. They worked just 30 minutes. Three hours of minimum wage is the lowest call-in rate in Canada. Consequently, call-in pay would necessarily be higher than pay for 30 minutes.
2. **is wrong** because even an hour of pay at minimum wage would be lower than call-in pay. Moreover, the premise of B is wrong; there is no restriction against paying employees in halfhour shifts.
3. **is wrong** because in most provinces you don’t have to pay employees for the full amount of the expected shift if you tell them to go home early due to a lack of work. Your liability, in other words, is limited to the call-in amount.