



Understand the EU Working Time Directive

Why, what and how

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Introduction

As an employer, you have several obligations towards your employees, including their working time. Some of them are formalised in the EU's working time directive. This ensures minimum standards within all European countries and contains rules.

Luckily, you don't need to read the entire directive. We provide an overview of the most important things you need to know.

But why do we need to track time?

The directive aims to ensure that all workers have a healthy working environment and a healthy work-life balance. The original directive is several years old.

What's new is that companies must now document compliance with the rules.

The reason for this is an EU judgement in 2019, where Spanish trade unions took Deutsche Bank to court for breaching the rules on maximum weekly working hours.

How can TimeLog help?

TimeLog is a Danish company that was founded in 2001. Our platform, TimeLog PSA, is used by +1500 companies to track working hours and automate manual labour.

Our solutions can grow with your needs. If you have max. ten users, you can use our free solution - TimeLog Time. If your needs are more complex, we can help you determine the next step! Please feel free to reach us at +45 70 200 645 or via our [website](#).

[Get Started with Free Time Tracking](#)



What does the EU Working Time Directive mean for you?

The Working Time Directive means that companies in the EU must follow specific rules on, for example, breaks and holidays and can document that they are following them.

On the next page, you can see what the directive prescribes more precisely about maximum working hours and rest periods.

You must take a break if you work more than six hours in a row

- There is a limit on weekly working hours: The average working time for each seven days must not exceed 48 hours, including overtime. Depending on national law and/or collective labour agreements, the 48-hour average is calculated over a reference period of up to 4, 6 or 12 months.
- You must have a rest break during working hours if you are on duty for more than 6 hours.
- You must have at least one daily rest period: for every 24 hours, you are entitled to at least 11 consecutive hours of rest.
- You must have at least one weekly rest period: For every 7 days, you are entitled to at least 24 uninterrupted hours in addition to the 11 hours of daily rest.

National differences

The European Court of Justice ruled in 2019 that employers must implement a time tracking system to make it easier to enforce working time rules.

However, how the directive is turned into national law differs from country to country.

These are the rules that apply in Denmark:

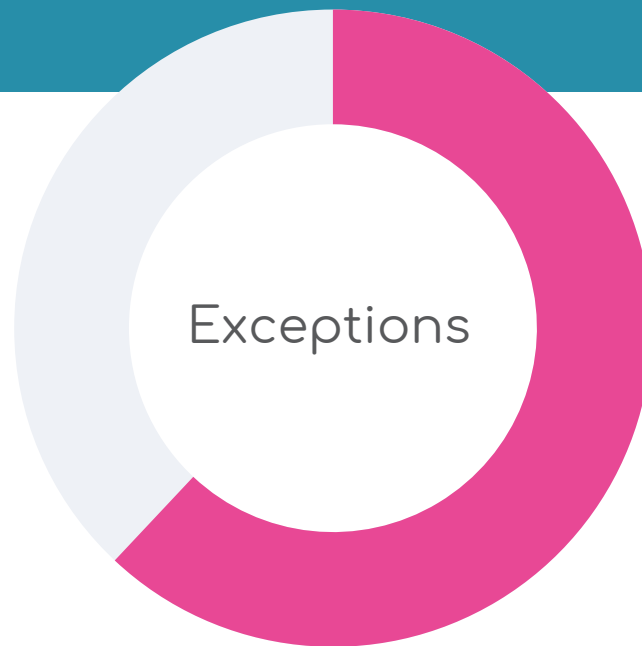
The system is required to be "objective, accessible and reliable" and must record employees' actual daily working hours.

The reason you need a system is, among other things, that the information:

- Must be stored for five years after the end of the period that forms the basis for the calculations.
- Must be accessible to public authorities.
- Must be accessible to the employees themselves.

This is difficult if you operate with slips of paper and gut feelings.

This section applies to Denmark only



Do the rules apply to all employees?

There are exceptions to the requirements for working time documentation, maximum weekly working hours, breaks and night shifts for, e.g. mobile workers, military personnel, self-employed with assisting spouse or children, and "self-organisers".

You are a "self-organiser" if:

- You can organise (all) your working hours yourself, **or**
- your working hours cannot be fully measured **or** predetermined in advance due to the specifics of your job

and

- you have a management function **or**
- you can make independent decisions

Each "self-organising" employee must be assessed individually, and this must be stated in the employment contract - or as an addendum - if you are a self-organiser.

How should the directive be implemented?

Every EU country does things differently, and each country will turn the directive into its law. This means that countries may have different rules, penalties and interpretations. Follow your national law and Government for updates!

As mentioned, Denmark has freedom of method regarding system selection and how you choose to track working hours. But **keep GDPR in mind** as a requirement for your new system and when it comes to the processes that need to be updated when you start tracking working hours.

Don't forget GDPR!

As a company, you need to make sure, among other things, that you:

Implement the new rules in the organisation's GDPR processes, records and documents, etc.

Inform employees that working time must be tracked before it happens (privacy notice)

Update or prepare relevant data processing agreements

Update or create risk assessments

Document that the general principles for lawful processing of personal data are met

Ensure that the system you choose has a high level of data security and complies with GDPR

Time tracking is a strategic effort

At TimeLog, we view time tracking as a strategic effort. It creates transparency and makes it easy for everyone to plan their tasks and workdays. But we do realise that only some see it the same way.

Therefore, in the last part of this white paper, we share some of the knowledge we've gained in the previous 20 years to help you clarify your needs and open up to the opportunities a new system can create for your business.



5 tips

when you are looking for a directive-compliant time tracking system.

1.

Accurate time tracking: The system should accurately track the time employees spend on various tasks and projects. This can help ensure compliance with the directive's working hours and rest periods regulations.

2.

Flexibility: The system must be flexible enough to meet the needs of different departments and teams and across offices. For example, different work patterns and schedules. It should be easy to document overtime and other special working arrangements.

3.

Reporting and analysis: The system should provide detailed reporting and analysis capabilities. Both to ensure you can document your compliance with the directive and to find potential for business improvement—for example, reports on working hours, flex and holidays.

4.

Ease of use: The system should be user-friendly and easy to use. The easier it is to track time, the more accurate data you will have about working hours. This, in turn, helps ensure compliance with the directive but also means you know how long certain tasks take, which helps with planning.

5.

Data security and privacy: The system should have robust data security and privacy measures in place to ensure that employee data is protected and handled in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.



20 questions

to help you clarify your needs
when choosing a time tracking
system.

1. Do you need to track time, expenses and mileage via mobile or desktop apps?
2. Do you need to authorise when employees track time and costs?
3. Would you like detailed reporting and analysis capabilities?
4. Do you need to manage payroll time, such as flex, holidays, and absences?
5. Do you want to be able to track time directly from your Outlook calendar?
6. Is employee data protected and handled following relevant laws and regulations?
7. Does everyone need to be able to view and track time on all projects and/or tasks?
8. Is the system compatible with other company systems?
9. Do you need to calculate work in progress?
10. Is the system scalable, and can it grow with your business?
11. Does the system provide support and training for users?
12. Is the system reliable, and can it handle large amounts of data?
13. Does the system deliver real-time data, and is it continuously updated?
14. Does the system comply with GDPR, and are processes for IT security, data anonymisation and data security documented?
15. Do you need to see which employees have time for new projects?
16. Can the system integrate with, e.g. HR, finance and payroll systems?
17. Would you like to move scheduled tasks between employees quickly?
18. Does the system need to handle different offices, time zones, multi-currency invoicing, etc?
19. Do you need to be able to extract data in Excel, Word, XML, Power BI or via an API?
20. Can the system handle different types of employees, such as full-time, part-time and contract workers?

[Get your checklist now](#)





Who is TimeLog?

TimeLog helps Professional Services Organisations, especially in the Nordics and Europe, evolve and grow their business.



Customers in +18 countries



+1500 customers



Founded in 2001

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