

Duty during meal breaks requires notice and proper pay

Situations often develop in UNA workplaces in which nurses are required to be available to work during their scheduled meal breaks, which means they are unable to leave the building during their meal breaks.

Meal breaks are normally not counted when the Employee's hours of work are calculated.

Under UNA's Provincial Collective Agreement, an Employer is permitted to make such a demand – with two important conditions. The Employee must be advised in advance of the requirement to be available, and the Employees must be paid for meal periods when they have received such a notification and are therefore unable to leave the building.

They must receive this pay even if they are not called to work.

The relevant Article in the Collective Agreement is 7.01 (c), which states:

Although meal periods are excluded in the calculation of regular hours of work, Employees required to be readily available for duty during their meal period shall be so advised in advance and paid for those meal periods at their Basic Rate of Pay.

For more information, contact your UNA local executive or your UNA Labour Relations Officer at 1-800-252-9394.

