

Flexibility tool

Flexibility can work on site. Start with a conversation.

A step-by-step guide for supervisors working through a request for flexibility, with space to record each step.

Check your award

This guide is general information only and isn't legal advice. Entitlements and obligations can vary depending on the award or agreement that applies. Before responding to a request, please check fairwork.gov.au for your current award.

Worker

Supervisor

Date of request

1 Understand what the person needs

- What change are they asking for, and why? They don't need to share personal details beyond what's relevant.
- Is it temporary or ongoing? When would it start? Is there flexibility in the request?

The request

☐ Formal request

☐ Informal request

☐ Temporary

☐ Ongoing

2 Understand what the job requires

- Which tasks need to be on site, and which are time-critical?
- What are the safety, supervision and client requirements, and the upcoming pressure points?

What the job genuinely requires

3 Explore practical options

Tick the options you considered.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Changed start or finish times | ☐ Compressed hours |
| ☐ Part-time or reduced hours | ☐ Predictable rosters |
| ☐ Different site or less travel | ☐ Split role (some office days) |
| ☐ Job sharing | ☐ Temporary arrangement |
| ☐ Leave options or phased return | ☐ Other |

Notes on options

4 Work through the impacts together

- What would need to change, such as handovers or backup cover? Who needs to be consulted?
- Could a trial period help test the arrangement?

Impacts and how we'll manage them

5 Make and communicate the decision

- ☐ Agreed
 ☐ Agreed in part
 ☐ Not agreed

What was agreed, or the business reasons if not

Start date

Response given on

6 Review

Review date

How is it working for the worker, the team and the project?

Flexibility options in construction

Option	Examples
Changed start or finish times	Earlier start for school pickup, or later start after drop-off
Compressed hours	Longer days with an agreed rostered day off
Part-time or reduced hours	Fewer days per week, or shorter days
Predictable rosters	Fixed days, or rosters locked in with more notice
Location	A site closer to home, or less travel
Split roles	Office-based tasks, such as estimating or planning, on some days
Job sharing	Two people sharing a role or set of responsibilities
Temporary arrangements	Changes for a set period, such as a return from parental leave
Leave options	Purchased leave, time in lieu or a phased return to work

Common myths

Myth	Reality
"Flexibility doesn't work in construction."	Many construction businesses use flexible rosters, compressed weeks and part-time roles successfully.
"If I say yes to one, everyone will want it."	Each request is considered on its own circumstances. Good flexibility can help keep the whole team.
"Flexible workers aren't committed."	Flexibility often increases loyalty and keeps skilled people who might otherwise leave.
"Flexibility is only for mothers."	People ask for many reasons, including caring for children or parents, study, health and wellbeing.

Make sure they don't miss out. Check opportunities too.

Workers on flexible arrangements should still get training and chances to progress. The Fair Opportunities Check can help.