

Reduced Hour Work Week (RHWW)

In recognition of the need for all of us to be able to attain a better balance between our work, home, family, and personal lives (life is busy and getting busier for all of us), in January 2023, New Dawn will transition to a Reduced Hour Work Week.

When employees are satisfied with their companies' time (how many hours you are required to work each week) and location (where you can work from) they are 2.6 times more likely to report being happy and 2.1 times more likely to recommend working for the company.

Making this transition now, not only stands to improve work-life balance for all of us now and into the future but gives us a competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining new hires. "Whoever cracks the four-day work week is going to win the talent war because that's going to be the new in-demand perk," says Marta Riggins, Employer Brand and Employee Engagement Strategic Consultant.

The human-centered company culture being forged has some recurring characteristics: flexibility, asynchrony, trust, belonging, and a holistic focus on well-being. – Global Talent Trends, 2022

In a 2022 study by Global Talent Trends, 63% of professionals indicated that work-life balance was a top priority, compared to 60% citing compensation and benefits as a top priority.

Reduced Hour Work Week Goals

- To take proactive steps to prevent workplace burnout
- To better balance the work and home lives of employees
- To re-frame how we think of work: from hours in office to responsibilities to execute/outcomes to achieve
- To exemplify the values of flexibility, self-determination, and accountability
- To empower staff to take responsibility for achieving outcomes
- To be mindful of pressures to constantly be productive

Reduced Hour Work Week Principles

Flexibility: this model may fit each division and person differently, though at the same time, each division and the overall organization requires stability and predictability to serve those we exist to serve. This model aims to empower everyone to think about and test out a work-week structure that fits best for their lives and their professional responsibilities.

As long as the choices you are making are (1) clearly communicated and agreed upon by your manager/team, (2) reflective of how you want to be working (not how you feel you have to be working), and (3) allow you to complete in a given week what needs to be completed for your team and division to function well, this model is meant to be flexible.

Personal discipline/self-determination: (a) empowering staff to take their own mental health and wellbeing seriously and to adjust their days and weeks to reflect the hours they put in outside of M-F 9:00-5:00pm and (b) empowering staff to take responsibility for the work that has to be done in a given day, week or month, rather than policing/enforcing a stringent set of working hours.

Accountability to, and respect for, self, colleagues, community, management, New Dawn: committing to this trial with openness and a spirit of wanting to make this work equally well for everyone, including the

community we serve. This trial will need to involve ongoing conversations among teams, and between employees and their managers, about how it is working, how the work is being shared/executed, and any adjustments that may need to be made along the way.

Our Changing Relationship to Productivity: as an organization made up of people committed to the betterment of the place they love and call home, we risk burnout if we're not able to step back from our work deeply and regularly to give ourselves fully to the other areas of our life and have time to recharge. While we predict that in making this change, on the whole we'll maintain or improve productivity (as has been the case in other jurisdictions where Reduced Hour Work Weeks have been tried), this change also invites us to think about our relationship to work and productivity and how much we take on in a given day, week, and month.

Who is eligible?

All full-time salaried staff.

How does it work?

The Reduced Hour Work Week allows all eligible staff to work 32 hours per week. These 32 hours include a one-hour paid lunch, or a 30-minute paid lunch and two 15-minute paid breaks each day.

For some people this will look like being at work for 8 hours per day (including a paid lunch) from Tuesday to Friday, for others it may be working from Monday to Thursday (being at work for 8 hours per day including an hour paid lunch). For others, it might look like working five days a week, but only from 8:00-2:30 each day including a paid lunch. Some will elect to continue to work from 9:00 to 5:00 or 7:00 to 3:00 or 8:00 to 4:00 Monday to Friday. Some will use this as permission to take every second or third Friday off, as they feel a desire to, or to stay home on Monday once a month.

Prior to the Reduced Hour Work Week, full-time employees were paid for 35 hours per week and lunches and breaks were unpaid, which typically meant about 40 hours/week in the office.

The Reduced Hour Work Week will not result in the loss of compensation for any staff. All salaries will remain as they were prior to this policy change.

Our aim of achieving greater flexibility and self-determination also means that, in conversation with your Manager and if your responsibilities allow, you may want to consider doing some of your work from home, or at least keeping in mind the option of working from home as needed, if that is a space that allows you greater focus and productivity.

What about overtime?

Overtime will accrue after 32 hours.

As always, the simplest way to deal with overtime is, whenever possible and approved by your Manager, to take it off the day it is accrued, or the day after. For example, if you have to work 5:00pm to 8:00pm for an event in the evening, you might come in at 11:00am that day instead of 8:00am, or you might head out at 2:00pm for a break, returning for the event at 5:00pm. Alternately, you might come in three hours later than usual the next day.

Where this isn't possible (where it doesn't fit with the needs of the division or your workload at the time), you would then bank those overtime hours to be taken off in the future.

2023 Proposal

Hours of Work	Current	Proposed
Per Week	35 with a one-hour unpaid lunch break or two 15-minute unpaid breaks and a half an hour unpaid lunch 40 hours in office 35 working hours	32 hours per week, including a one-hour paid lunch break or two 15-minute paid breaks and a half an hour paid lunch 32 hours in office 28 working hours
Overtime	Accrues after 35 working hours	Accrues after 32-hour week

Time Off Type	Current	Proposed
Sick Days	7 (carried over to a max of 15)	7 (carried over to a max of 15) Renamed: Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing Days
Vacation Days	15 (+1 for each year of service) No carry-over (except in exceptional circumstances) Not paid out in the event of the end of employment	Existing employees keep current vacation allotment New employees: 15 days Maximum carryover 5 days/year; all else must be used in calendar year Paid out in the event of the end of employment on a pro-rated basis (time worked in the year)
Paid Holidays/Closures	13	13
Christmas -> New Years	At discretion of CEO, typically closed	Closed, dates of closure determined on an annual basis. Staff who have to work will be credited with overtime hours for that time to be used at their discretion.
Volunteer Time Off	1	0
Personal Day	1	0

Notes: Personal day, volunteer time off, +1 vacation day/year all modest efforts to create a workplace that provided better work-life balance to employees. A switch to a Reduced Hour Workplace seems to displace the need for some/all of these.

What about holidays?

New Dawn observes thirteen (13) public holidays and other days for which full-time, salaried staff will be paid. They are: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday, Labour Day, National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day.

The Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code notes that "If the employee qualifies for the holiday and the holiday falls on the employee's regular day off, the employer must give the employee a different day off with pay. The employer can give the day off with pay on the working day immediately following the holiday, the working day immediately following the employee's vacation, or another day agreed upon by the employee"

This means, for example, that a Tuesday-Friday employee will take a Monday holiday on the Tuesday after the holiday (or another day agreed with the employer) and a Monday-Thursday employee will simply take the holiday on the Monday.

Tips for Transitioning to a Reduced Hour Week

Work from home days: If your set-up at home allows it, consider taking work-from-home days to get through work that requires more focus and less interruptions. Sometimes these days can allow you to knock off tasks that would typically stretch out over a week, between phone calls and knocks on the door.

Shorter meeting durations: instead of 30- and 60-minute default meeting times, can some meetings be completed in 20 minutes or 40 minutes?

MS Teams chat: a place where team members can drop notes when they think of them (i.e. when awoken at 3:00am) but others can check the chat as it is convenient for them (i.e. when their workday starts). Unlike an e-mail or a text, team members won't get a notification that someone has just added something to the Team chat, so it won't pull them away from their sleep, family, weekend, or other tasks they're working on.

Block time off in your day, week or month when you don't want to be disturbed: this could be for answering e-mails, writing, policy-development, or thinking more deeply about the work we're trying to accomplish together. Maybe its every Monday, at the start of your week. Or maybe every Thursday morning, before you head into your 3-day weekend. Think about where you're then best able to execute this work -> at home, in another location in the building, in your office with a "do not disturb" sign posted?

Time-Off Point Person: If you are not in the office, who is best to handle urgent issues that come up? Identify your time-off partner and talk through with them the kinds of emergencies you should be contacted for (rare, urgent, life or building-threatening), the kinds of issues they should attend to on the spot, and the kinds of issues that aren't actually urgent and can wait for your return.

E-mail and Voicemail Notes on Message-Return Time: consider adding a note to your e-mails and voicemails that let's those calling or e-mailing know that you only return calls and e-mails on certain days or that you receive a high volume of calls and e-mails and will do your best to return them within a certain number (3, 5, 7) of days, and where (e-mail and phone number) emergencies can be directed (if applicable).

Rethinking Productivity: while we all have responsibilities that we need to execute and, in some cases, these are very time-sensitive (for example, an issue arises with a Homecare client, or there is a sizeable leak in an apartment roof), but often times the pressure to produce/be productive is one we put on ourselves. Spend some time thinking about what tasks have to get done, and which can wait until tomorrow, next week, or next month.

Please direct any questions about New Dawn's Reduced Hour Work Week to your Manager.