

Preamble

Workers in the meatpacking industry are entitled to certain fundamental rights. The following enumeration of these rights is for the purpose of establishing minimum workplace guidelines for workers in the meatpacking industry. These rights are in addition to all other rights provided by state or federal law.

1. The Right to Organize

Nebraska is a right-to-work state and Nebraska employees have the right to choose whether they want to join together for collective bargaining purposes. Employees in the meatpacking industry shall have the right to meet together for the purpose of organizing themselves without fear of harassment or reprisals.

2. The Right to a Safe Workplace

Employees in the meatpacking industry are entitled to the safest possible working conditions. The State of Nebraska commits itself to work with all appropriate governmental agencies to accomplish this goal. Employers are committed to accomplishing this goal. In this regard, employers commit to the following actions:

- 2.1 To establish a management/employee safety committee to meet on a regular basis to examine safety practices, to include but not to be limited to safety issues arising out of line speed, and implement the best safety practices for all employees in accordance with federal and state laws.
- 2.2 Employees shall have the right to file complaints with the plant safety committees without fear of reprisal in order to make the safety committee aware of safety concerns. The committee shall act promptly to assist the employer in addressing safety and health dangers by making recommendations regarding corrective measures and notify the employee of the action taken. An employee shall also have the right to refer safety concerns to the appropriate state and/or federal agencies without fear of reprisal.

3. The Right to Adequate Facilities and the Opportunity to Utilize Them

The employer agrees to provide to employees:

- 3.1 Adequate and working restroom facilities
- 3.2 Adequate room for meal and rest breaks
- 3.3 Adequate locker facilities
- 3.4 Adequate time for necessary restroom breaks

4. The right to Complete Information

Each employee should be entitled to receive an employee manual at the time of hire that contains:

- 4.1 A copy of the Meatpacking Industry Workers Bill of Rights
- 4.2 A complete description of the salary plan and benefits plan
- 4.3 A job description of the employee's position
- 4.4 A description of leave policies
- 4.5 A description of the work hours and work hours policy
- 4.6 A description of the occupational hazards known to exist for the position

5. The Right to Understand Information Provided

An employee is entitled to understand his or her rights and obligations. The employer shall provide an explanation in the employee's native language of that employee's rights and duties as an employee either person to person or through written materials.

6. The Right to Existing State and Federal Benefits and Rights

Certain rights are already afforded to employees under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act, the Nebraska Workplace Safety Consultation Program, and the U.S. Department of Labor Occupation Safety and Health Act. Employees have a right to understand for themselves, or through a representative, their rights and obligations under these Acts. The employer, through a written document or training, shall provide to the employee information to inform and educate the employee's relative to the employee's rights and duties under the laws.

7. Right to be Free from Discrimination

Everyone has the right to respect and protection against discrimination. This includes, but is not limited to the right to equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability all in an environment free of sexual and physical harassment. Employers should treat their workers with respect. Existing protections against harassment, discrimination, and intimidation should be enforced.

8. Right to Continuing Training Including Supervisor Training

Employers should provide on-going training opportunities to employees for enhanced skill development and industry changes. Supervisors should be provided with opportunities to enhance their language skills in order to be conversant in the identified non-English language.

9. Right to Compensation for Work Performed

Every employee has the right to expect payment of wages owed for work performed by the employee. The employer shall pay all wages due to its employees. Employees have the right to contact the Nebraska Department of Labor for assistance in determining their rights under the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act.

10. The Right to Seek State Help

The State of Nebraska commits itself to protecting the rights of employees in the meatpacking industry. Trained Labor Law Program staff is available to assist employees and employers with information concerning a variety of labor-related issues, including:

- Discrimination Law (Right to Work Law)
- Health and Safety Regulations
- Lunch Period Law
- Medical Examination Law
- Non-English Speaking Employee Law
- Wage & Hour Act (Minimum Wage Law)
- Wage Payment & Collection Act
- Workplace Safety Consultation Law

For more information or questions regarding this Bill of Rights, please contact Yadira Pena, Meatpacking Industry Worker Rights Coordinator, at (402) 471-4715 or 1-800-627-3611, or email at yadira.pena@nebraska.gov



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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