

Planning for public holidays and your business in 2020

By [Faan Coetzee](#)

17 Jan 2020

South Africa has 13 official public holidays and in 2020, enjoys 14 as one falls on a Sunday.



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The public holidays for 2020 are:

- New Year's Day: Wednesday, 1 January
- Human Rights Day: Saturday, 21 March
- Good Friday: Friday, 10 April
- Family Day: Monday, 13 April
- Freedom Day: Monday, 27 April
- Workers' Day: Friday, 1 May
- Youth Day: Tuesday, 16 June
- National Women's Day: Sunday, 9 August
- National Women's Day Holiday: Monday, 10 August
- Heritage Day: Thursday, 24 September
- Day of Reconciliation: Wednesday, 16 December
- Christmas Day: Friday, 25 December
- Day of Goodwill: Saturday, 26 December; and
- New Year's Day: Friday, 1 January 2021

National Women's Day (9 August) is the only public holiday that falls on a Sunday. The next day, Monday 10 August, becomes an additional public holiday in terms of the Public Holidays Act. Both 9 August and 10 August are thus public holidays. Two consecutive public holidays can have a significant impact on working arrangements and shifts, especially in workplaces that run a 24/7/365 operation.

Employers should consider the effect on the workplace and implement measures to address the impact on work. Employers should also consider collective agreements and Bargaining Council agreements that impact public holidays, working arrangements and shifts. Section 18 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No 75 of 1997 provides that an employer

may not require an employee to work on a public holiday except in accordance with an agreement. It also prescribes the calculation for wages for work on the day.

In terms of section 2(2) of the Public Holidays Act, any public holiday shall be exchangeable for any other day which is fixed by agreement or agreed to between an employer and employee.

Employees who are on strike on public holidays are not entitled to any remuneration. They are only entitled to be remunerated for public holidays if they “ordinarily worked” on the public holiday (see section 16 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No 75 of 1997). As they would not ordinarily work on any day during the strike, they would not ordinarily work on a public holiday that falls in the strike period. Thus, they are not entitled to remuneration for the public holiday during the strike.

Employers can expect requests for additional leave days on Monday, 15 June, Friday 25 September and around Wednesday, 16 December as these dates are convenient to employees who wish to create long weekends.

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