

City of San Diego Hotel Wage Ordinance

September 2025



GENERAL SUMMARY

The City of San Diego has officially introduced a **wage ordinance** for hotels (also applies to event centers and associated facilities, as well as amusement parks) which will, over the course of the next five years, adjust hotel minimum wages to \$25.00 per hour by July 2030. This ordinance generally applies to all hotel employees in the City who work two (2) or more hours in one or more weeks per year.

MINIMUM WAGE REQUIREMENTS

The timeframe for wage increases is as follows:

Hotel Wage Per Hour	Effective Date
\$19.00	July 1, 2026
\$20.50	July 1, 2027
\$22.00	July 1, 2028
\$23.50	July 1, 2029
\$25.00	July 1, 2030

Annually, beginning on July 1, 2031 the hourly wage rate will be adjusted by the CPI. The adjusted rates will be announced before April 1st of the effective increase year.

REQUIRED WORKPLACE POSTINGS AND DISCLOSURES

Under the ordinance, the city must publish a bulletin and notice template suitable for hotel employers no later than April 1, 2026. Successive notices shall be updated no later than April 1 of the effective year. Employers are required to post the notices in a conspicuous place in English and any other language spoken by at least five percent of employees at the worksite. Additionally, employers must provide written notice to each employee by July 1, 2026 and to new employees at the time of hire which include the hotel employer legal name, any fictitious business names, address, telephone number, and the hotel's requirements under this ordinance. This information must be provided in English and in the employee's primary language (if it is referenced in SD Municipal code section 312.0106(c) and spoken by at least 5% of employees at the worksite).

RECORDKEEPING

Hotels shall create contemporaneous written or electronic records of the dates, hours worked, and wages paid for each employee. These records must be retained by the employer for at least three years. Failure to retain the records or provide them to an enforcement official upon official request creates a rebuttable presumption of violation of the ordinance. *In the event wage records are unavailable, the enforcement official may rely on the employee's reasonable estimate of wages owed.*

REMEDIES AND PENALTIES

Any person bringing enforcement action under this ordinance is entitled to payment of back wages owed, reinstatement of employment, reasonable attorney's fees and costs, liquidated damages equal to double back wages owed. Violations also incur a \$500-\$1,000 civil penalty, paid to the City and cumulative penalties are limited to \$10,000.

This is an information service of CHLA. It does not purport to serve as legal or other professional advice, and the counsel of competent legal professionals should always be sought.

ORDINANCE SCOPE

This ordinance applies to hotels with 150+ guest rooms, as well as any contractors/subcontractors working at properties for 30+ days in a calendar year. Additionally, this ordinance applies to any contracted services or leases that are provided on the grounds of a hotel for at least 30 days in a calendar year.

Notably, this ordinance applies to all restaurants, bars, banquet halls, event spaces, retail shops, parking facilities, spas, and other facilities directly related to hotel operations that are located on the grounds of a hotel. There is a rebuttable presumption that a person is an employee and not an independent contractor.

Other covered industries include amusement parks and event centers.

WAIVERS

For hotels with collective bargaining agreements, agreed upon waivers by parties to the CBA's will supersede this ordinance. To rely on the CBA exemption, the hotel must provide the city with a copy of the CBA upon request.

ENFORCEMENT

Under the ordinance, both an employee or the City may bring a cause of action against the hotel in court. Submitting a complaint to the City is neither a prerequisite, nor a bar to bring civil action.

Questions or Concerns?

Alexander Rossitto,
Advocacy Director
California Hotel + Lodging Assn.
aj@calodging.com