



Paying super on payday

How to pay employee super guarantee under Payday Super from 1 July 2026, including due dates and qualifying earnings.

Making super payments

How employers make payments under Payday Super from 1 July 2026.

What payments are qualifying earnings

Which payments count as qualifying earnings for super guarantee from 1 July 2026.

Payment deadlines for Payday Super

When employers need to pay super guarantee (SG) under Payday Super, starting 1 July 2026.

QC 105839

Making super payments

How employers make payments under Payday Super from 1 July 2026.

Last updated 4 February 2026



Payday Super starts on 1 July 2026

This information applies to super guarantee payments from 1 July 2026.

Some regulations and law for Payday Super are still being considered by Parliament. For progress updates see [Payday superannuation legislation](#).

Paying super contributions

As an employer, you must pay super guarantee (SG) contributions for your employees. SG is in addition to payments you make to your employees for their work (such as wages). Paying SG correctly means you can avoid paying the super guarantee charge (SGC).

Follow these steps to pay SG for your [eligible employees](#):

1. Calculate the SG amount to pay. This is 12% of the qualifying earnings you pay to your employee for the pay period. The day you pay the qualifying earnings to your employee is known as the 'QE day'. You may:
 - a. pay more superannuation under an industrial award, enterprise agreement or individual contract
 - b. stop paying SG to high-income employees once they reach the [maximum contributions base](#).
2. Pay SG into a [complying super fund](#). In most cases your employees can choose the super fund. The fund needs to be able to allocate the SG to the employee's member account at the time it receives the amount.
3. Ensure your payment of SG is received by the super fund no more than 7 business days after the QE day (unless longer applies). It is best practice to make the SG contribution at the same time as you pay qualifying earnings to your employees. See [Payment deadlines for Payday Super](#).
4. Pay and report through [SuperStream](#) (most payroll software is able to do this). This means the super payments and associated

information move through the system electronically.

5. [Keep records](#) of your SG calculations and payments.

A contribution is on time if it is received by your employee's super fund within 7 business days after paying your employee. If you use a commercial clearing house, allow enough time for them to process your payment. There are situations where you may have a [longer period](#) to make an on-time contribution (for example, when a new employee starts).

A contribution for a QE day is considered late if it is received by the fund more than 7 business days after the day you pay your employee (unless longer applies) but before an assessment for the SGC is made.

Example: paying super guarantee

Mohamed employs Caroline.

Mohamed pays \$3,000 in wages to Caroline on 10 July 2026 (this is the QE day, that is, payday). This amount is qualifying earnings.

As set out in the steps above:

1. Mohamed calculates the SG that Caroline is entitled to. This is $12\% \times \$3,000 = \360 .
2. Mohamed pays the \$360 SG contribution into Caroline's chosen complying super fund.
3. Mohamed ensures that the SG contribution is received by Caroline's super fund no more than 7 business days after the QE day, that is, by 21 July 2026. He decides to make the SG contribution on the same day that he pays Caroline. It is received by the super fund on 15 July 2026.
4. Mohamed uses his payroll software to pay and report Caroline's SG through SuperStream.
5. Mohamed keeps a record of his SG calculations and payments for Caroline.

Check for complying super funds

You can check the compliance status of a super fund using [Super Fund Lookup](#) .

If the fund is not listed, you can get written confirmation from the fund's trustee. This confirmation must state that the fund:

- is a complying super fund
- intends to accept your super contributions
- will continue to meet the relevant legal requirements.

If you pay contributions to a non-complying super fund, the contributions:

- won't count towards meeting your SG obligations
- won't be tax deductible
- may incur a fringe benefits tax liability.

Record keeping

You need to keep records that show:

- the amount of super you paid for each employee
- how you calculated the minimum individual SG amounts for each employee
- that you offered your employees a choice of super fund.

How your contributions are allocated

You are no longer able to elect to apply a late contribution to offset an unpaid SG amount. By law, your eligible contributions are automatically allocated to the earliest QE day for which the minimum SG has not been paid in full (that is, the earliest QE day for which there is an individual base SG shortfall).

If you pay more contributions than you need to for a QE day, the excess is carried forward to the next QE day (up to 12 months). Contributions, including any excess, are applied in the order they are received by the fund.

Example: late contribution allocated to earliest QE day with unpaid SG

Katie employs one employee, Alex. She pays Alex fortnightly.

On 9 July 2026, Katie pays Alex \$2,560 in wages (QE day 1). She pays \$307.20 to Alex's super fund on the same day.

On the next 2 pay cycles on 23 July 2026 (QE day 2) and 6 August 2026 (QE day 3), Katie pays Alex his wages as normal, but is unable to pay his super.

On 20 August 2026 (QE day 4), Katie pays Alex his usual wages and is able to pay his super as well. The super contribution is received by Alex's super fund on 25 August 2026, within the 7 business day timeframe.

However, when this payment is received there is still an individual base SG shortfall (an amount of unpaid minimum SG) for QE day 2. The super contribution made on 20 August 2026 will be allocated to QE day 2 as a late payment. In turn there will still be an individual base SG shortfall for QE day 3 and QE day 4.

Katie can't elect to apply the super contribution in a different way. Even though she intended the contribution to be for QE day 4 and it was received on time by the super fund for QE day 4, it must still be allocated to the earliest QE day for which the minimum SG amount has not been paid in full (QE day 2).

Claim a tax deduction

You can claim a tax deduction for:

- on-time eligible contributions
- late eligible contributions
- payment of the SGC.

You are not eligible to claim a tax deduction for a late payment penalty or any general interest that accrues if you don't pay the SGC.

SBSCH is closing

The [Small Business Superannuation Clearing House](#) (SBSCH) will be closed from 1 July 2026. Existing users of the SBSCH will have access to the service until 30 June 2026. Employers are no longer able to register as new users of the SBSCH.

You can exit from using the SBSCH ahead of time. You may already have other options readily available. Check your existing software and payroll package, as it may already include super functions you can use to pay SG. If it does not include a super function, look for options from super funds or digital service providers offering payroll services, software or commercial clearing houses.

For more information on alternative options and key dates, visit the [Small Business Newsroom](#) or speak to your registered tax professional.

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What payments are qualifying earnings

Which payments count as qualifying earnings for super guarantee from 1 July 2026.

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What are qualifying earnings

Qualifying earnings (QE) is a new term for the types of payments you make to employees that are used to calculate the super guarantee (SG) under Payday Super.

What qualifying earnings means for employers

From 1 July 2026, all employers will use qualifying earnings as the base to calculate both the SG amount and the super guarantee charge (SGC). Currently employers calculate SG and SGC on different earnings bases.

For many employers, the new concept of qualifying earnings doesn't change the amount of SG you are currently paying for your employees.

Most employees are [eligible](#) for SG. Independent contractors paid mainly for their labour are considered employees for SG purposes.

What amounts count as qualifying earnings

Qualifying earnings include the following.

- Ordinary time earnings (OTE), i.e. payments for ordinary hours of work, including certain types of paid leave, allowances, bonuses and lump sum payments. There are no changes to what payments are considered OTE under Payday Super.
- All commissions paid to an employee.
- Salary sacrifice amounts that would qualify as qualifying earnings had they not been sacrificed to superannuation.
- Earnings paid to workers who fall under the expanded definition of employee, including payments to independent contractors paid mainly for their labour.

Some payments may fall into more than one category of qualifying earnings, such as commissions. Those payments are covered only once to the extent of the overlap in categories.

Ordinary time earnings

Payments for ordinary hours of work are qualifying earnings. This includes certain types of paid leave, some allowances, bonuses and lump sum payments. Find out [what payments](#) are considered OTE.

The following tables are non-exhaustive lists of common amounts employers pay. They indicate which amounts are considered OTE for the purposes of the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992* (SGAA). Any OTE amounts are included in qualifying earnings.

You can use these tables to help you work out the minimum SG contribution for your employees.

How you work out OTE might be impacted if your employee has a [salary sacrifice](#) arrangement in place.

You may have additional super obligations under an [industrial instrument](#) [↗](#) (award or agreement) to pay super on amounts that are not OTE.

Gross

Table 1: Gross

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Ordinary hours of work ↗ – as defined in an award or agreement, or if the ordinary hours of work are not stated in an award or agreement, or not separated from other hours, the total hours	Yes	Yes
Casual loading	Yes	Yes
Shift penalties ↗ (including public holiday penalties)	Yes	Yes
Workers' compensation ↗ – payment for hours an employee performs work or is required to attend work	Yes	Yes

See Workers' compensation (paid leave type W)		
Piece rates ↗ for work done during ordinary hours	Yes	Yes
Daily rates for employees compensated using a flat daily rate	Yes	Yes
Flexi time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all ordinary hours paid to employees under a flexi-time arrangement • flexi-time arrangements are considered different to rostered days off (RDOs) and time off in lieu (TOIL) 	Yes	Yes
Breach of break payments ↗ , such as for rest, meal and crib: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where an employee doesn't get an appropriate break, some awards require employees to be paid at overtime rates until the employee is released from duty • even though the employee is being paid at overtime rates, they are working ordinary hours 	Yes	Yes
Time for travel or training paid within the span of ordinary hours	Yes	Yes
Charge rates for work performed, outcomes achieved, or targets met by contractors	Yes	Yes
Public holidays ↗ – not worked or worked as	Yes	Yes

ordinary hours. For more information see [overtime](#)

Example: ordinary hours of work not stated

Kim works in a call centre. Under her contract she works a minimum number of hours per week. She also works extra shifts when needed, though there is no clear pattern to this.

There is no award or agreement that specifies Kim's ordinary hours of work, and she is not paid overtime rates for her extra shifts.

All of Kim's wages are OTE. As there are no stipulated ordinary hours of work, and no pattern of regular or usual hours, Kim's ordinary hours of work are all the hours she actually works. All of Kim's wages are therefore also qualifying earnings.

Example: piece rates where no ordinary hours stated

Evan works part time as a fruit picker for Golden Fruit Farm Pty Ltd. He is paid 15 cents for every kilogram of apples he picks. There are no ordinary hours specified in any award or agreement.

Evan picks 5,000 kilograms of apples in his 30 working hours in the week and is paid \$750 by Golden Fruit Farm Pty Ltd, as the piece rate amount is higher than his minimum wage guarantee under the Horticulture Award.

The \$750 paid to Evan is OTE. As his ordinary hours of work are not specified in any award or agreement, his ordinary hours of work are the hours that he actually works. The \$750 paid to Evan is therefore also qualifying earnings.

Paid leave and other payments

Paid leave includes the various forms of payment, including absences, cashing out in service or upon termination.

Other paid leave (paid leave type O)

Table 2: Other paid leave (paid leave type O)

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Annual leave 	Yes	Yes
Annual leave loading that is clearly linked to a lost opportunity to work overtime	No	No
Annual leave loading  – all other	Yes	Yes
Long service leave  that is not paid under a portable long service leave scheme	Yes	Yes
Long service leave that is paid under a portable long service leave scheme 	No	No
Family and domestic violence leave 	Yes	Yes
Rostered days off  – time taken and paid at ordinary rates	Yes	Yes
Sick, personal and carers leave 	Yes	Yes
Time off in lieu (TOIL) of overtime  – time taken and paid at ordinary rates	Yes	Yes
Study leave	Yes	Yes

Special paid leave	Yes	Yes
Gardening leave	Yes	Yes

Paid parental leave (paid leave type P)

Table 3: Paid parental leave (paid leave type P)

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Employer paid parental leave  , such as maternity leave, paternity leave or adoption leave	No	No
Government paid parental leave (GPPL)	No	No

Workers' compensation (paid leave type W)

When considering workers' compensation for OTE purposes, this refers only to amounts you pay in relation to compensation schemes administered by either a:

- federal, state or territory workers' compensation authority
- federal, state or territory road and transport accident authority.

Table 4: Workers' compensation (paid leave type W)

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Workers' compensation  – payment for hours an employee performs work or is required to attend work	Yes	Yes
Workers' compensation  – employee is not required to	No	No

work, including any top-ups or make-up pay to bring the amount paid on these absences up to their normal rate of pay		
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Ancillary and defence leave (paid leave type A)

Fair Work defines a range of leave types that are collectively referenced as 'ancillary' leave.

Table 5: Ancillary and defence leave (paid leave type A)

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Community service leave  , including voluntary emergency management activities for bodies such as a State Emergency Service, Country Fire Authority and the RSPCA	No	No
Jury duty leave  , including attendance for jury selection and jury duty	No	No
Defence reserve leave  , paid to volunteers of the Australian Defence Forces to undertake defence services	No	No

Cash out of leave in service (paid leave type C)

Table 6: Cash out of leave in service (paid leave type C)

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Cashed out annual leave  and leave loading in service	Yes	Yes

Refer to Overtime for leave loading that is referable to the lost opportunity to work overtime		
Cashed out long service leave in service Refer to Other paid leave (paid leave type O) for long service leave paid under a portable leave scheme	Yes	Yes
Cashed out sick, personal and carer's leave in service ↗	Yes	Yes
Cashed out rostered days off in service	Yes	Yes
Cashout of TOIL of overtime pay in service	No	No

Unused leave on termination (paid leave type U)

This section only applies to the specific leave types referenced below. For other types of leave paid upon termination, see [Termination payments](#) [↗](#).

Table 7: Unused leave on termination (paid leave type U)

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Annual leave or leave loading ↗ accrued after 17 August 1993 paid on a normal termination, such as voluntary resignation, employment terminated due to inefficiency, or retirement	No	No
Long service leave ↗ accrued after 17 August 1993	No	No

paid on a normal termination, such as voluntary resignation, employment terminated due to inefficiency, or retirement		
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Allowances

[Allowances](#)  may be paid to compensate employees:

- for their work efforts to recognise a higher skill level
- to compensate for adverse work conditions
- to compensate for the employee incurring an expense.

Table 8: Allowances

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Hourly on-call allowance for ordinary hours of work	Yes	Yes
Task allowances for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work efforts or skills – such as industry allowances, higher duties, leading hand, first aid or supervisor allowances • adverse conditions – such as allowances for working at heights, in confined spaces, in the cold, wet or heat, or danger • staying employed with the current employer – such as for retention allowances. These are reported as allowance type KN in your STP reporting.	Yes	Yes
Expense allowances that are paid with the reasonable	No	No

expectation that the money will be fully expended by the employee in the course of providing their services		
<p>Allowances that represent partial compensation for expenses likely to be incurred by employees that are paid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regardless of whether or not the employee incurred the expense, or • where the allowance amount has no relationship to the actual cost incurred by the employee 	Yes	Yes

Example: expense allowance expected to be used in full

Matteo is paid a tool allowance under the [Joinery and Building Trades Award](#) . It is expected that Matteo will use the whole allowance to supply and maintain his tools.

Matteo's employer doesn't make SG contributions on the tool allowance as it is not a reward for the services which he is providing as an employee of the company. The tool allowance is not OTE and does not fall under any other specific inclusions under the qualifying earnings definition. It will not be included in Matteo's qualifying earnings.

Overtime

[Overtime](#)  payments are not OTE, provided the employee's ordinary hours of work are clearly identified in the award or agreement. As such, overtime payments are also not qualifying earnings.

If you can't distinctly identify overtime amounts, all the hours actually worked are included in the employee's ordinary hours of work in the award or agreement.

These rules also apply if the payments are calculated as an annualised or lump sum component of a total salary package. Overtime payments must be clearly identifiable. Otherwise, all hours worked are considered ordinary hours of work.

Table 9: Overtime

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
<p>Overtime  payments – provided the employee's ordinary hours of work are clearly identified such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beyond their ordinary hours of work • outside the agreed number of hours • outside the spread of ordinary hours (the times of the day ordinary hours can be worked) 	No	No
Annual leave loading referable to the lost opportunity to work overtime	No	No
<p>Time off in lieu (TOIL)  – cash out of TOIL in service</p> <p>For unused TOIL on termination, see termination payments</p>	No	No
On call allowance for hours outside ordinary hours of work	No	No

Call back allowance	No	No
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Example: overtime identified in an award or agreement

Pierre is employed under an award to work 38 ordinary hours per week with additional reasonable overtime. However, Pierre's roster includes shifts with planned overtime. He works a total of 48 hours per week, including 10 hours of overtime paid at overtime rates.

The payment to Pierre for his 38 ordinary hours of work is OTE.

The payment for the 10 hours of overtime is not OTE and does not fall into any other categories of qualifying earnings. The overtime payments will not be included in Pierre's qualifying earnings.

Bonuses and commissions

All commissions are qualifying earnings under Payday Super law, including commissions solely for work performed entirely outside ordinary hours.

Table 10: Bonuses and commissions

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Commission payments 	Yes	Yes
Commission solely for work performed entirely outside ordinary hours	No	Yes
Performance bonus	Yes	Yes
Christmas bonus	Yes	Yes

Bonus labelled as ex gratia but in respect of ordinary hours work	Yes	Yes
Sign-on bonus for new employees	Yes	Yes
Referral bonus	Yes	Yes
Return to work bonus after parental leave	Yes	Yes
Bonus solely for work performed entirely outside ordinary hours	No	No

Example: bonus paid in respect of overtime

Jessie is in IT, on an above award annual salary which includes payment for reasonable additional hours. His ordinary hours are Monday to Friday. As part of a project, Jessie works on Sunday. As a reward for meeting a project milestone which was entirely due to the work completed on Sunday, members of the team are each paid a \$1,000 bonus.

As the bonus is being paid in respect of work that was done entirely outside of ordinary hours, the \$1,000 is overtime and not OTE. The \$1,000 overtime will not be included in Jessie's qualifying earnings.

Directors' fees

Directors' fees include payments to:

- the director of a company
- a person who performs the duties of a director of the company
- a member of the committee of management of the company, or as a person who performs the duties of such a member if the company is not incorporated.

Directors' fees may include payment to cover travelling costs, costs associated with attending meetings and other expenses incurred in the position of a company director.

Table 11: Directors' fees

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Remuneration you pay to a working director	Yes	Yes
Remuneration you pay to a non-working director	Yes	Yes

Lump sum payments

Lump sum payments include payments in arrears, return to work and termination payments.

Payments in arrears (lump sum E)

Lump sum E refers to [back pay or an arrears payment](#)  that was payable more than 12 months before the payment was made. Regardless of the period to which the payment relates, OTE is worked out on the actual component of pay that is being paid.

For example, if the back pay or arrears payment includes ordinary hours, higher duties allowances, paid annual leave and overtime, then all but the overtime is OTE (and therefore qualifying earnings).

Return to work payments (lump sum W)

Table 12: Return to work payments (lump sum W)

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
Bonus paid to an ex-employee to encourage	Yes	Yes

them to return to the employer		
Bonus payments made to end industrial action and have employees resume work	Yes	Yes
Bonus paid to an employee who has resigned and is encouraged to withdraw their resignation	Yes	Yes

Termination payments

Payments made in consequence of the [termination of employment](#)  are generally not OTE.

Table 13: Termination payments

Payment	OTE (for the purposes of SGAA)	Qualifying earnings
<p>Unused leave on termination, including annual leave, annual leave loading and long service leave.</p> <p>This applies regardless of the reason for termination or treatment for tax purposes.</p>	No	No
<p>Payment in lieu of notice , for all termination reasons.</p> <p>This applies regardless of the reason for termination or treatment for tax purposes.</p>	Yes	Yes
<p>Unused personal or carers leave on termination, for all termination reasons.</p> <p>This applies regardless of the reason for termination or treatment for tax purposes.</p>	No	No

Unused rostered days off (RDOs) and time off in lieu (TOIL) of overtime paid on termination	No	No
<p>Other payments in consequence of the termination of employment, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a gratuity or golden handshake • genuine redundancy  or early retirement scheme payments above the tax-free limit • severance pay • non-genuine redundancy • compensation for loss of job • compensation for wrongful dismissal • invalidity payments other than compensation for personal injury • lump sum payments paid due to the death of an employee 	No	No

Example: termination of employment due to genuine redundancy

Michael's job is no longer required to be performed. His job is now redundant, and after consulting with Michael, his employer pays him a genuine redundancy on 14 October 2025. It totals \$40,000 and comprises:

- payment of \$10,000 in lieu of notice for 4 weeks of wages
- redundancy payment of \$25,000

- ex-gratia payment of \$5,000.

Out of the total payment of \$40,000 only the \$10,000 payment in lieu of notice is QE. Michael's employer must pay SG on the payment in lieu of notice, and works out the SG as follows:

$$\$10,000 \times 12\% = \$1,200.$$

Salary sacrifice contributions

Amounts that you paid to your employee that would be qualifying earnings but have instead been salary sacrificed to superannuation are included in qualifying earnings.

Generally, when an employee has a [salary sacrifice arrangement](#) in place, you need to consider how the salary that is being sacrificed is taken into account when determining the employee's qualifying earnings under the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992* (SGAA).

Table 14: Salary sacrifice

Sacrificed amounts	Qualifying earnings
Salary sacrificed to superannuation – where the salary that is sacrificed would otherwise be qualifying earnings if it was instead paid to the employee	Yes
Salary sacrificed to superannuation – where the salary that is sacrificed would not otherwise be qualifying earnings if it was instead paid to the employee, such as paid parental leave or overtime	No
Salary sacrificed to other employee benefits – including amounts that are fringe benefits and exempt fringe benefits	No

Other amounts included in qualifying earnings for super guarantee

Other amounts included in qualifying earnings for super guarantee are:

- all commissions paid to an employee, including commissions solely for work performed entirely outside ordinary hours
- payments made to workers who fall under the expanded definition of employee for SG purposes, such as independent contractors paid mainly for their labour, artists, musicians, sportspeople and statutory office holders.

Maximum contributions base

Once your employee earns more than the maximum contribution base, you do not need to make further SG contributions.

Super guarantee opt out for high-income earners with multiple employers

Check if you can opt out of receiving super guarantee from some employers to avoid exceeding the contributions cap.

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Maximum contributions base

Once your employee earns more than the maximum contribution base, you do not need to make further SG contributions.

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see [Payday superannuation legislation](#).

When the maximum contributions base applies

The maximum contributions base (MCB) is the upper limit of your employee's earnings for each financial year for which you need to pay super guarantee (SG). If your payments of [qualifying earnings](#) to your employee reaches the MCB, you can stop paying the minimum SG contributions for the employee for that year.

Calculating the MCB

The MCB for a financial year is calculated using the following formula (rounded down to the nearest 10 dollar multiple):

$$\text{Concessional contributions cap} \times 100 \div \text{charge percentage}$$

For 2026–27 the MCB is expected to be \$250,000, calculated as follows:

$$\$30,000 \times 100 \div 12 = \$250,000$$

The [concessional contributions cap](#) is the basic concessional contributions cap for the financial year in which the payment is made. From 1 July 2024, the basic concessional contributions cap is \$30,000.

The charge percentage is the SG rate, which is currently 12%.

If you have paid \$250,000 (based on the expected concessional contributions cap) of qualifying earnings to an employee for the 2026–27 year, you will not need to make SG contributions for that employee for any additional qualifying earnings paid to that employee for the remainder of the financial year.

Super guarantee opt out for high-income earners

An employee with multiple employers who is likely to exceed the MCB for a financial year may provide you with an [SG shortfall exemption certificate](#).

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Super guarantee opt out for high-income earners with multiple employers

Check if you can opt out of receiving super guarantee from some employers to avoid exceeding the contributions cap.

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Eligibility

You can apply for a certificate to opt out of receiving some super guarantee (SG) contributions if you meet both of these conditions:

1. You have more than one employer in a financial year – this includes being employed by more than one employer at the same time or switching your employment from one employer to another in a financial year.
2. You expect the compulsory SG contributions from these employers to exceed your [concessional contributions cap](#) for the year.

The SG employer shortfall exemption certificate releases one or more of your employers from their SG obligations for a specified period, ending at the end of the financial year. If you receive an exemption

certificate, you must have one employer paying SG contributions for your benefit in the financial year.

It's important you talk to your employer before applying as they can choose to disregard an exemption certificate and continue to make SG contributions.

Before applying, consider your employment arrangements, such as how your pay and other entitlements may change and the effect of any relevant award or workplace agreement. Your tax agent may provide you with advice based on your circumstances.

How to apply to opt out

You will need to apply to the ATO for an SG employer shortfall exemption certificate, using the approved form. The form is currently under development and is expected to be available in mid-2026.

The application:

- must be made by the employee to be covered by the certificate – an employer can't apply for an exemption certificate
- must specify the employer, period and financial year to be covered by the certificate.

We must receive your application at least 30 days before the first day of the specified period to be covered by the certificate.

What we consider

We can only issue you with an exemption certificate if:

- you're likely to exceed your concessional contributions cap in the financial year that includes the specified period
- after issuing the certificate, you will still have at least one employer obliged to pay SG contributions (or pay the SGC if they do not) in the financial year
- issuing the certificate is appropriate in all of the circumstances.

When considering your application, we will take into account the effect:

- of any other certificates already issued to you for the financial year

- that issuing the certificate is likely to have on your concessional contributions for the income year.

Outcome of the application

If your application is approved, we will issue a written notice to each of your employers covered by an exemption certificate. We will also send you a copy of the certificate for each exempted employer.

Once issued, the exemption certificate cannot be varied or revoked.

If we decline your application, we will notify you. We are not required to inform your employers.

If you're dissatisfied with our decision, you may [Dispute or object to an ATO decision](#).

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Payment deadlines for Payday Super

When employers need to pay super guarantee (SG) under Payday Super, starting 1 July 2026.

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Some regulations and law for Payday Super are still being considered by Parliament. For progress updates see [Payday superannuation legislation](#).

When to pay

You must pay super guarantee (SG) for your eligible employees to avoid the super guarantee charge (SGC).

A contribution is on time if it is received by your employee's super fund (with all the necessary information to allocate the contribution to the employee's member account) within 7 business days after paying your employee. If you use a commercial clearing house, allow enough time for them to process your payment. It is best practice to make your SG contributions on payday. This is also known as the 'QE day' – that is, the day you pay qualifying earnings, or QE, to your employees.

For super purposes, 'employee' includes workers who fall under the extended definition of employee for SG purposes, such as independent contractors, sportspeople and performers.

Definition of 'business day'

A business day is any day other than:

- a Saturday or Sunday
- a day that is a public holiday for the whole of any Australian state or territory.

This means if there is a state or territory-wide public holiday, that day is not a business day for the purposes of Payday Super, even if you are not in that state or territory.

If a public holiday applies to only part of a state or territory (for example, Royal Hobart Show Day), that day is still a business day for Payday Super purposes.

Extended due dates

You may be allowed more time to make an on-time contribution in the following situations:

- [First contribution for a new employee or super fund](#)
- [Out-of-cycle payments](#)
- [Exceptional circumstances affecting multiple employers](#)
- [Extension of one due date overlaps the next due date](#)

First contribution for a new employee or super fund

The payment deadline is extended for the first eligible SG contribution you are making:

- for a new employee
- to a new complying super fund for an existing employee after you have stopped making contributions to another super fund.

In these situations, the contribution must be received by the super fund within 20 business days after the relevant QE day. A QE day is the day you pay your SG employees (payday).

Example: new SG employee

Hannah runs a business and has just engaged a new SG employee, Mary, who has been engaged as a contractor for her labour. When she makes her first payment of qualifying earnings to Mary on 9 July 2026 (QE day 1), Hannah's first contribution to Mary's super fund has an extended due date of 7 August 2026, which is 20 business days after QE day 1. The extended due date includes an additional day because the Picnic Day holiday in the Northern Territory is not counted as a business day.

Hannah's next payment of qualifying earnings to Mary is on 30 July 2026 (QE day 2). For Hannah to make the SG contribution on time for QE day 2, the contribution must be received by Mary's super fund within 7 business days of 30 July 2026, which is 11 August 2026. The normal due date includes an additional day because the Picnic Day holiday in the Northern Territory is not counted as a business day.

Out-of-cycle payments

If you make a payment of qualifying earnings to an employee that is out of cycle with their regular payday, your SG contribution must be received by the super fund within 7 business days after the next payment of qualifying earnings to the employee that is not out of cycle.

The ATO can determine what payments of qualifying earnings are out of cycle and the associated criteria.

Example: out-of-cycle payment

Virgil runs a business. He pays his employee Luca a Christmas bonus of \$1,000 on 7 December 2026. Luca is normally paid weekly and Virgil's next payment of Luca's regular wages is made on 10 December 2026. The bonus payment meets all the criteria outlined by the ATO to be an out-of-cycle payment.

The SG contribution for Luca's Christmas bonus is due on the same day as the contribution for the next regular payday – 21 December 2026.

Exceptional circumstances affecting multiple employers

The ATO can determine that a class of employers are affected by an exceptional circumstance and the period for which the employers are impacted.

If an exceptional circumstance determination covers you and the current payday, your SG contributions must be received by super funds before the later of:

- 20 business days after the current QE day
- 20 business days after the day that the determination is made.

QE day is the day you pay your employees (payday).

Example: exceptional circumstances

Christen runs a business and usually pays her employees fortnightly. The next payday is 4 August 2026 (QE day 1).

Over the weekend Christen's local area is impacted by a flood. A number of businesses, including Christen's, close for safety and clean up reasons.

The ATO issues an exceptional circumstance determination on 7 August 2026 for the period 4 August 2026 to 24 August 2026. The determination applies to all employers in Christen's local area.

Christen has until 4 September 2026 (20 business days after 8 August 2026) for contributions to be received by her employees' super funds for QE day 1.

For QE day 2 on 18 August 2026, Christen has until 15 September 2026 (20 business days after QE day 2) for contributions to be received by her employees' super funds.

Extension of one due date overlaps the next due date

Sometimes you may have an extended due date to make contributions for one QE day (first QE day) but the due date for the next QE day is before the extended due date for the first QE day. QE day is the day you pay your employees (payday).

In this situation, the due date for the second QE day is the same as the extended due date for the first QE day.

Example: extended due date overlaps next due date

Aitana runs a business and has just hired a new employee, Ellie. After she makes her first payment of wages to Ellie on 9 July 2026 (QE day 1), Aitana's first contribution to Ellie's super fund has an extended due date of 7 August 2026 (20 business days after QE day 1).

Aitana pays her employees fortnightly. Her second payment of wages to Ellie is made on 23 July 2026 (QE day 2). The second contribution of SG would ordinarily be due on 4 August 2026.

The extended due date includes an additional day because the Picnic Day holiday in the Northern Territory is not counted as a business day.

Because the contribution for QE day 2 is due earlier than the extended due date for QE day 1, the contribution for QE day 2 is also due on the extended due date of 7 August 2026.

The due date for the contribution for QE day 3 will follow a normal 7 business day timeframe, unless other extensions apply.

Late contributions

A contribution for a payday is considered late if it is received by the fund more than 7 business days after paying your employee but before an assessment for the SGC is made.

Late contributions can reduce the SGC. However, you may still be liable for the notional earnings, administrative uplift and choice loading components even if you pay the individual SG base shortfall in full.

For more information see [The new super guarantee charge](#).

Paying faster with the New Payments Platform

From 1 July 2026 you, or your service provider, can use the New Payments Platform (NPP) to make contributions. The NPP is a real-time payments platform used across Australia. It increases the speed and efficiency of payments to super funds.

Using the NPP, contributions made through payroll systems or clearing houses could be received by the super fund on the same day you make the payment. Payments made through some service providers may still take longer to reach the super fund.

The availability of the NPP will be accompanied by other [improvements to SuperStream](#), such as improved member verifications, better error messaging and faster visibility of fund status changes. These initiatives are intended to help employers and clearing houses to meet the Payday Super deadlines.

Managing cashflow

Moving to paying super at the same time as salary and wages may impact your cash flow.

If you start making changes now, your business will be Payday Super ready for the 1 July 2026 start date.

Check out our cash flow tips and guidance:

- establish [good business habits](#)
- [manage your business cash flow](#)

If you use a registered tax or BAS agent, they can also help.

QC 105846

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