Working During Holidays

Shanaz Qaradaghi

**PRE-READING:** Share a time you worked on a holiday. What did you like and not like about it? Did you receive holiday pay or overtime pay?

I work at a store. I am a part-time worker, but on holiday seasons I work a lot of hours. There are no days off during the holiday, or excuses. I don’t have time to spend time with family. For example, last year I worked a full shift on Thanksgiving Day. For that reason, we celebrated Thanksgiving on another day. I don’t have time to travel, decorate my house, or buy presents. I have to do all that in a hurry.

People like to spend a lot during holidays. It’s fun when they buy stuff, but sometimes they are stressed out. For example, they can’t find the right thing they want, or they can’t get the size or the color. Really, it’s a very busy time. That’s why customers shop until the last minute. To be honest, I enjoy working during the holiday season; it’s fun when I see people buying presents, decorations, and things for charity. I am happy when I help customers find what they want.

However, on the other hand, I feel stuck in the work place when I see everybody preparing for the holiday, and I am not. The corporations that own these stores need to think about their employees outside the work. We are people with families. We should have time off to celebrate holidays. Stores should limit their hours around holidays so that employees can spend time with their families.

**POST-READING:** What do you think of Shanaz’s ideas about what corporations should do for their employees around holidays?

**RESEARCH OPTION:** Look up the Fair labor Standards Act. Identify three ways it protect workers. Is there anything about the law that you would change? If so, what?

**ACTION STEPS:** Find out which stores in your neighborhood will be open on Thanksgiving Day and which ones will be closed. Write to them and tell them what you think of their decision.

What does the law say about working overtime?

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FSLA), passed in 1938, says that most workers must be paid overtime (time-and-a-half) for any hours they work over 40 hours in one week. Learn more about the history of this and other protections for workers on the next page.

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