

Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP)
Minimum Wage Fact Sheet for 2023



With picking season right around the corner, many growers have questions about SAWP wages.

Question: What is the minimum wage for SAWP workers?

The short answer: Employers must pay SAWP employees a rate equal to or higher than:

Applicable date	Minimum Wage	Vacation Pay (4%)	Total hourly pay, including Vacation Pay
Jan. 1, 2023 to May 31, 2023	16.05	0.642	16.69
June 1, 2023 to Dec. 15, 2023	16.75	0.67	17.42

The long answer: From January 1, 2023 to May 31, 2023, National Commodity Wage for tree fruit in BC is \$16.05 and this is the minimum wage (during that time, BC's minimum wage being \$15.65, and the default is the higher wage). On June 1, 2023 the minimum wage increases to \$16.75, which is now higher than the National Commodity Wage (\$16.05) - thus, BC minimum wage of \$16.75 becomes the new minimum wage for the SAWP workers.

These wages must have 4% vacation pay added to them, Therefore, the SAWP minimum wage with vacation pay this year is as follows:

January 1, 2023, to May 31, 2023: **\$16.69** per hour

June 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023: **\$17.42** per hour

Question: What if I pay a piece rate instead of an hourly rate?

The Short Answer: The BC piece rates are effective until January 1, 2024:

Crop	Piece Rate for the 2023 Season
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes vacation pay• Increased about 2.8% from the prior season• The piece rates will increase for next season (on January 1, 2024) by about 7%.
Apples	\$22.65 per bin (27.1 ft ³ / 0.767 m ³)
Apricots	\$24.91 per half bin (13.7 ft ³ / 0.388 m ³)
Cherries	\$0.285 per lb / \$0.610 per kg
Grapes	\$23.01 per half bin (13.7 ft ³ / 0.388 m ³)
Peaches	\$23.01 per half bin (12.6 ft ³ / 0.357 m ³)
Pears	\$24.38 per bin (27.1 ft ³ / 0.767 m ³)
Prune-Plums	\$24.38 per half bin (13.7 ft ³ / 0.388 m ³)



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The long answer (for SAWP): Since a SAWP worker must earn the minimum hourly wage, it is important to note that the piece rate may be lower than the hourly rate. If the piece rate works out to be less than the hourly rate, the employer will pay the hourly rate.

For example, if a SAWP worker in August 2023 was being paid \$22.65 per bin, and picked 5 bins in 8 hours, then the hourly earnings for the day are greater than the piece rate:

- piece rate = $5 \times \$22.65 = 113.25$
- hourly rate = $8 \times \$16.75 \times 1.04 = 139.36$

In this case, the worker's pay for that day of work would be \$139.36 (including vacation pay). To ensure this calculation is done properly, employee timesheets must include hours of work (start, end time, and any unpaid breaks), followed by the calculation of piece work vs hourly wages to allow this comparison to be made.

Here is a sample form that collects the required information to determine the appropriate wage/piece rate for SAWP workers.

Employers must also keep a record of the hours worked to ensure the following:

- The minimum average hours of 40 hours per week
- The minimum of 270 hours in a term of 6 weeks or less from all SAWP employers of that individual employee in a single season (i.e. they could work 200 hours at one farm and 70 at another)
 - Records must also be signed by the worker

For more information on SAWP, visit the Western Agricultural Labour Initiative (WALI) website

<https://walicanada.ca/>

or the BCFGA website - labour page

<https://www.bcfga.com/218/Labour>

To sign up for the WALI newsletter:

<https://walicanada.ca/subscribe/>

For help with applying for Temporary Foreign Workers email:

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