



2020/21

State of Shift Work Report

deputy 

This report is for any manager of shift workers or business owner who wants to better understand the current state of shift work, what their employees are most concerned about, and how they can better motivate and manage their staff. 2020 has been a year of dramatic change and shift workers had a lot to say.

The barista making a perfect latte. The nurse caring for loved ones. The shop worker stacking empty shelves. For the shift workers who keep businesses running smoothly, 2020 has brought dramatic changes to how they work — and what they worry about both on and off the job.

In this exclusive report, you'll discover what is top of mind for shift workers right now, how COVID-19 has changed the way they work, and how managers can keep up in 2021. Based on survey responses from more than 1,400 shift workers across the world, this data represents a wide range of industries and sizes.

Read on to learn what employees are saying — and get specific tips for ways to support and motivate your team in the year ahead.

METHODOLOGY

The results of the 2020/21 State of Shift Work Report are based on responses from more than 1,400 shift workers around the world. These shift workers are part of all industries, with the majority working in hospitality, retail, and healthcare.

1,469 shift workers

20 countries

738 essential workers

KEEP READING TO LEARN:

01

The motivating drivers shift workers consider most and least effective

02

The impact of COVID-19 and how shift workers have adapted

03

The shift work trends managers have been ignoring — but shouldn't

The shift work industry at a glance

75%

have one
shift work job

50%

consider themselves
an "essential worker"

3/4

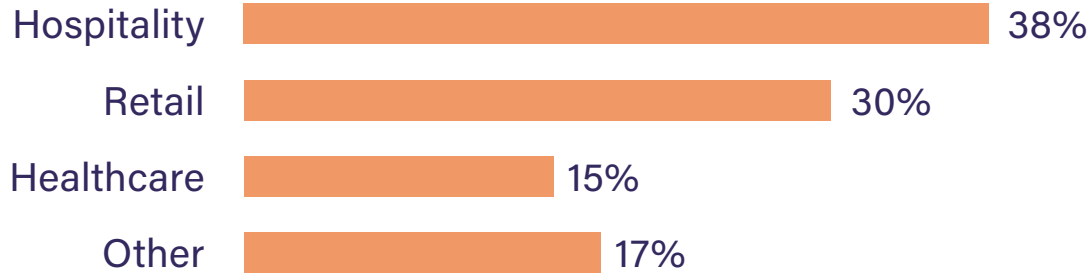
39 years old
or younger

From your corner coffee shop to your local hardware store to your parents' aged care facility, shift workers keep businesses thriving.

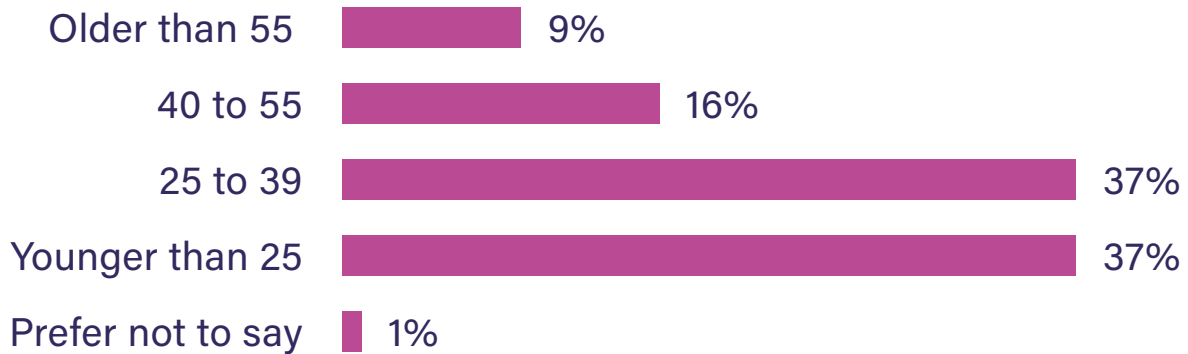
For most of these workers, they're pretty split on why they do shift work. Whether that work best fits their personal needs or it's just the way to work in that profession, these workers are getting the job done.

However, money is a motivator, specifically for those in the United States, and generally for younger workers. Forty-one percent of Gen Z respondents said they do shift work for the paycheck, compared to only 20% of Baby Boomer respondents. What's the most likely reason this older generation does shift work? Forty-three percent of Baby Boomers said it's the best option for their personal needs.

INDUSTRIES WORKED



AGE OF SHIFT WORKERS



Job satisfaction: the highs and lows of shift work in 2020

90%

feel like they
contribute to the
organization's success

64%

feel consistently
supported by
their managers

91%

think developing
a career path
is important

Shift workers have been on the front lines during the global pandemic. They were stocking shelves relentlessly when consumers were rushing to buy toilet paper. They were administering tests for patients who fell ill. They were supplying coffee for the parents dealing with their children's distance learning.

And despite the pressures of the COVID-19 crisis, and external stereotypes of this type of work, shift workers are aware of their contribution to their community and their organization.

In fact, nearly 90% feel like they contribute to their organization's success. Only 4% of respondents said they don't feel like they contribute to their organization's success, and only 7% had no opinion.



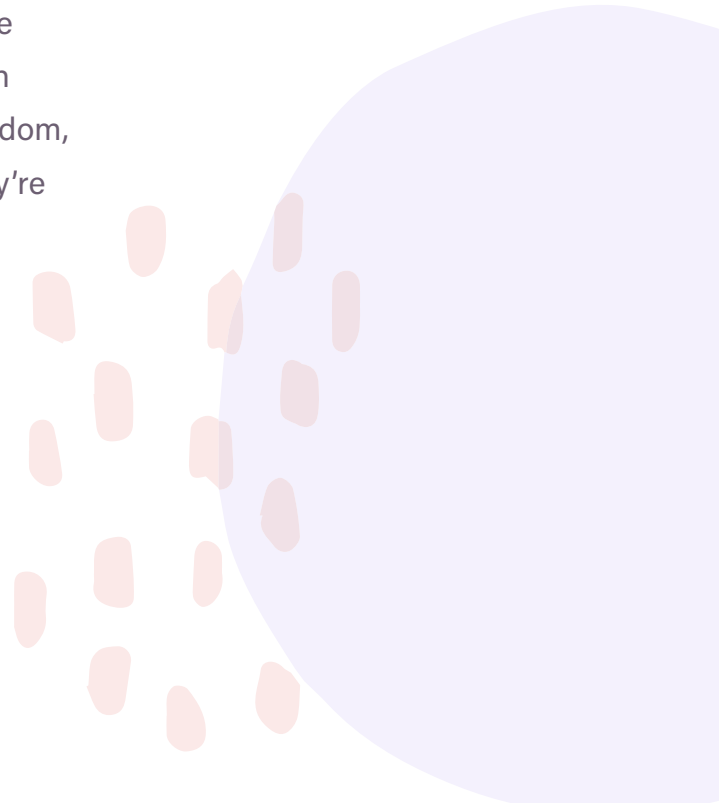
This satisfaction varies slightly by age and industry.

Almost all — 95% — of Baby Boomers feel they contribute to the organization's success. Employees in retail and healthcare industries feel strongly that they contribute to the organization's success (more than 90% in each industry), whereas workers in hospitality are less likely to feel like they contribute.

However, with 85% of hospitality workers agreeing they add to the business's success, they're still in the majority.

While retention is often an issue in some industries, like hospitality, a saying seems to be holding true: Employees don't leave bad jobs — they leave bad managers.

And it seems like shift workers are giving their managers the thumbs up. Ninety percent of shift workers feel supported by their managers. Though, there is a bit of room for improvement. Only 64% feel like they're consistently supported. That number is lower when you look into specific countries. In the United Kingdom, for example, only 57% of shift workers feel like they're consistently supported by their managers.



HOW OFTEN MANAGERS SUPPORT SHIFT WORKERS



BOTTOM LINE:

Shift workers
believe
their work
is making
a notable
difference



If you think that shift workers don't care about the future, think again. Ninety-one percent of respondents said that their career path is important. Healthcare workers are much more likely to report their career is very important, with 78% percent of respondents agreeing, compared to retail (63%) and hospitality (61%).

And those career aspirations impact how shift workers think about their job and what they're doing at their job.

Overall, 81% of shift workers feel their job is contributing to their career. While 37% don't believe they have opportunities to move forward in their organization, they do believe they're gaining valuable experience they can use in a future position at a different company.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A CAREER PATH



PRO TIP

Support your staff

Need a few tips to keep your team engaged? Here are three ways the best managers support their staff.

EMPOWER YOUR TEAM

Enable your team to [swap shifts](#) with other employees in their squad to avoid last-minute no-shows.

ENSURE YOUR STAFF KNOW WHAT'S EXPECTED FROM THEM

You and your team should have clearalignment about what hours they need to work and what tasks they need to perform. Use your [communication app](#) — and turn on read receipts — so you have a clear record of communication.

SHARE VISIBLE RECORD OF HOURS WORKED

You shouldn't be the only one who can see what hours your staff work. Choose a workforce management tool that provides both managers and staff a transparent, single source of truth so there aren't any surprised on pay day.



COVID-19, shift work, and 2020

69%

concerned about
job security

#1

cause of concern
is COVID-19

87%

organizations changed
the way they schedule

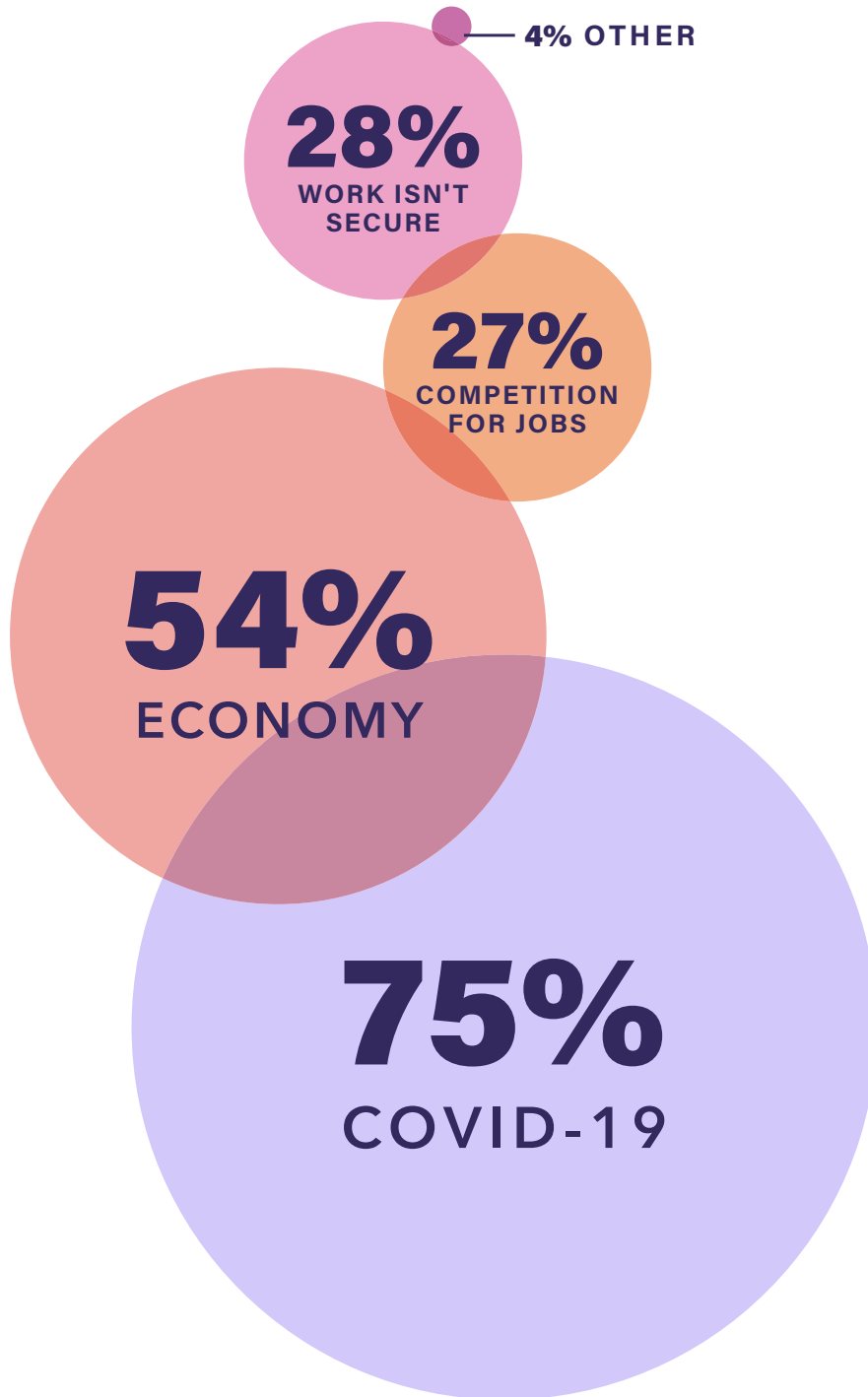
One Friday, coffee shops were bustling, bars were packed, and malls were buzzing. The next, a global pandemic seemed to pause everything.

And behind those businesses were a community of shift workers. While some industries saw an increase in demand, others were struggling to keep their doors open.

Most shift workers (69%) are concerned about job security, though workers in the healthcare industry are less concerned. However, two-thirds of workers in the hospitality industry are concerned about job security.

COVID-19 is the number one driver of this job security anxiety, with 75% of respondents saying it was their top concern. In the United Kingdom, that number goes up to 85%.

REASONS SHIFT WORK ARE CONCERNED ABOUT JOB SECURITY



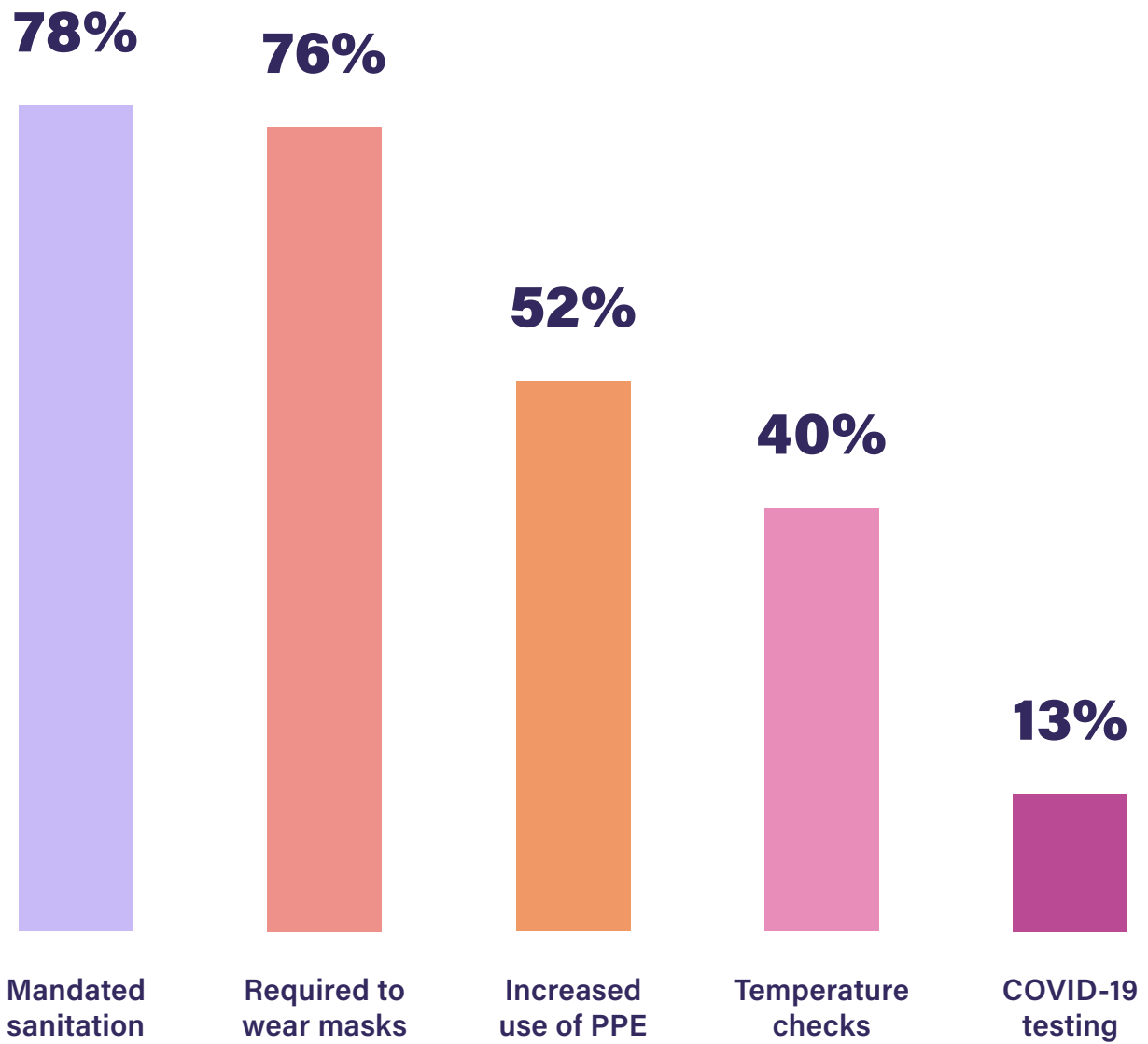
COVID-19 is a more common cause of job security concerns among women. Seventy-eight percent of women said COVID-19 was behind their job security fears, compared to 69% of men.

For businesses, COVID-19 has also had a huge impact on their day-to-day operations. Most organizations (87%) have changed the way they schedule shifts, wrestling with new safety protocols and abrupt changes.

Second, almost all shift workers have had to adapt to new protective measures. Ninety-seven percent of shift workers say they've had to adjust to new protocols because of COVID-19. Interestingly, at the time of the survey, only 47% of Australian workers said they were required to wear masks, compared to 80% in the United Kingdom and 90% in the United States.

Looking at who was most impacted by the global pandemic, hospitality lost considerably more opportunities than other industries. Fifty-eight percent of hospitality workers said COVID-19 created fewer opportunities in their workplace, compared to healthcare (36%) and retail (38%). Similarly, the younger generations seemed to have taken a bigger hit. Fifty percent of both Gen Z and Millennials said there are fewer opportunities, compared to Gen X (39%) and Baby Boomers (31%).

THE TOP PROTECTIVE PROTOCOLS SHIFT WORKERS STARTED TO USE BECAUSE OF COVID-19*



*Note that restrictions vary in each country and continue to fluctuate

PRO TIP

Create a safe and healthy workplace

How you adapt to new protocols is critical to keep you, your staff, and your customers safe. And it doesn't have to be so hard. Here are three tips to help you create a safe working environment.

DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR EMPLOYEE'S HEALTH STATUS

When employees do come to work, use [questions at clock-in](#) to double-check their status. You can ask employees if they have taken their temperature and if they have followed good hygiene standards such as hand washing.

USE VIDEO

[Share explainer](#) videos of new protocols. If you require the front desk staff at your clinic to maintain a safe social distance, sharing a video of how exactly they are supposed to do that can increase compliance.

USE A TOUCHLESS CLOCK-IN APP

Manual clock-in systems, such as punching a time clock or scanning fingerprints, can increase the chances of spreading the virus. Instead, upgrade to a [touchless clock-in system](#) with facial and voice recognition so your team doesn't have to touch a clock-in station.



What managers aren't thinking about — but should

82%

want more communication from their employer

66%

rank flexibility as their #1 shift work perk

96%

agree shift workers deserve more respect

Managers of shift workers are busy. They're creating schedules, trying to get their team paid correctly, and looking at labor costs. Sure, they want to make sure their team is happy, but where's the time? And what do shift workers even want?

The vast majority of shift workers — 96% — like some part of their job. On top of that, more than a quarter say they don't have any dislikes for shift work. This is a big win for managers because they're already starting on a high note. But if managers don't know exactly what drives their employees, they won't know how to keep their staff happy.

TOP BENEFITS OF SHIT WORK ACCORDING TO EMPLOYEES

60%

Ability to fit in other commitments



66%

Flexible schedules



39%

Easier to work part-time



While the majority of shift workers say they don't have any dislikes, there are a few topics that float to the top for workers who do have complaints. The number one issue for Australians is less job security (41%), whereas the top issue for the United Kingdom and United States is low pay (37% and 38%).

Although most shift workers say they like some part of their job, there's one big takeaway for managers. Shift workers want more cachet. Nearly all of shift workers — 96% — believe that shift workers deserve more respect. Additionally, 82% think that they could be a better employee if their organization communicated and told them more about what's going on.

Transparency, respect, and flexibility go a long way in the shift work business.



96% AGREE SHIFT WORKERS DESERVE MORE RESPECT



97%
Australia



97%
United Kingdom



96%
United States

PRO TIP

Make your employees a top priority

Now more than ever, it's essential to give staff tools that make their jobs easier, help them balance their schedule with their personal life, and make them feel valued by the business. Here are three tips to help you make your team feel supported.

BUILD SCHEDULES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUR EMPLOYEES

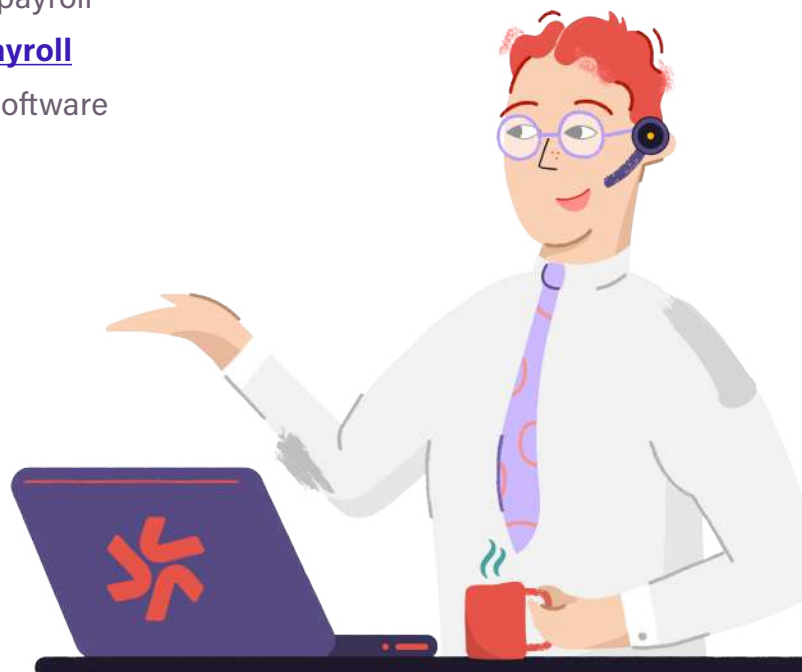
Allow your employees to [trade shifts](#), with your approval, so they get the flexibility they want and you're not left scrambling to find replacements at the last minute.

ENSURE ACCURATE PAY FOR YOUR TEAM

Automate your payroll processes by using a payroll processing software. Then [integrate your payroll software](#) and your workforce management software so your staff are always paid correctly.

CONNECT YOUR TEAM

Some of your team may be remote, some may be isolating, and, because of squad schedules, some may never see each other anymore. Share experiences to remind each other of the impact they make to your business and your customer's lives.



Creating fair working conditions for both managers and employees

68%

don't know about
fair work legislation

96%

believe they would
benefit from legislation

49%

don't know if their
employer adopted
fair work policies

When you focus on ensuring that your business promotes time and wage fairness across the board, you build a culture of trust between you and your employees. And if you don't create a fair business, you're at risk for penalties and even a tarnished brand reputation.

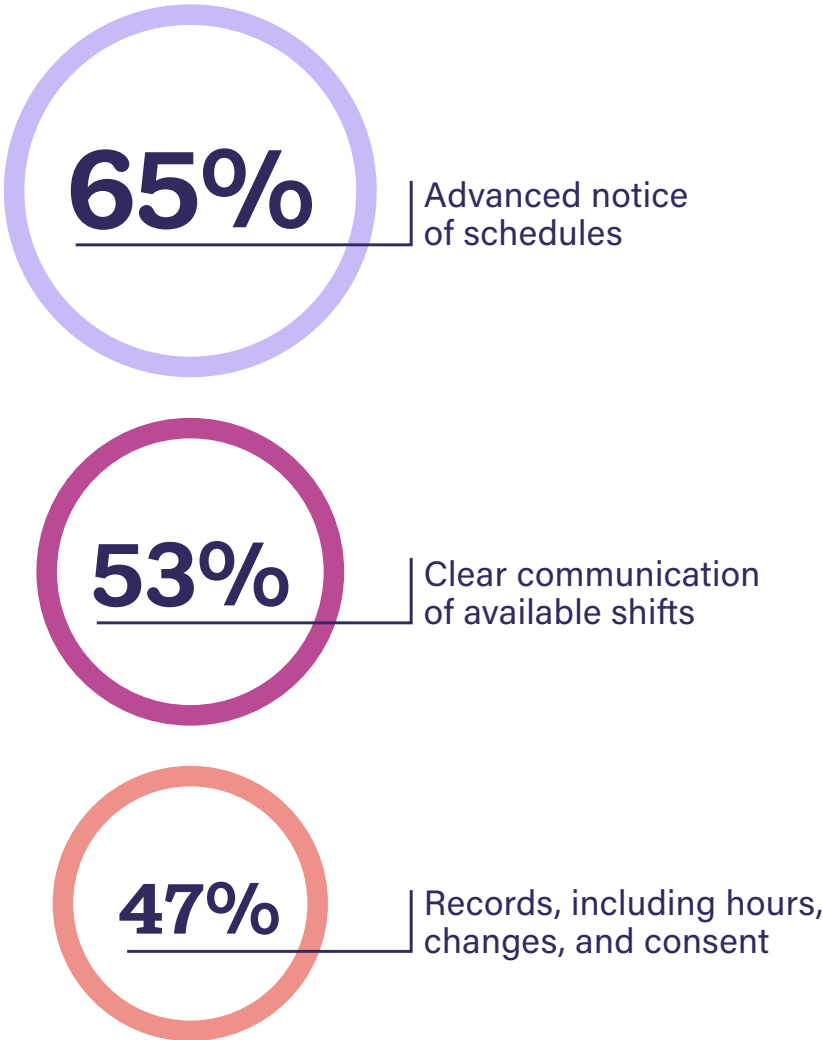
Many cities and countries have created official regulations to support a fair working environment for shift workers. However, there's significant room for improvement with fair work initiatives.

Australia is far ahead of the United Kingdom and United States when it comes to general knowledge about fair work regulations. Ninety-two percent of Australian workers know about the regulations, whereas only 24% of Brits and 13% of Americans know about fair work laws.

Similarly, Australia is ahead in adoption of these policies. In Australia, 55% of shift workers said their city or state mandates it and an additional 36% said although they have fair working conditions, it's not mandated. In the United Kingdom and United States, those numbers are far lower, hovering around 15%.

Regardless of whether or not these regulations are enforced, shift workers still believe they would be beneficial. In fact, 96% believe they would benefit from legislation. So what are the top issues most important to shift workers?

MOST IMPORTANT REGULATIONS



PRO TIP

Simplify — and enforce — fair working conditions

While there are nuances to how each jurisdiction applies the concepts of fair work (if at all), the overarching concepts remain the same. Here are three tips to make work a little more fair for your team.

PROVIDE HASSLE-FREE ADVANCE NOTICE OF SCHEDULES

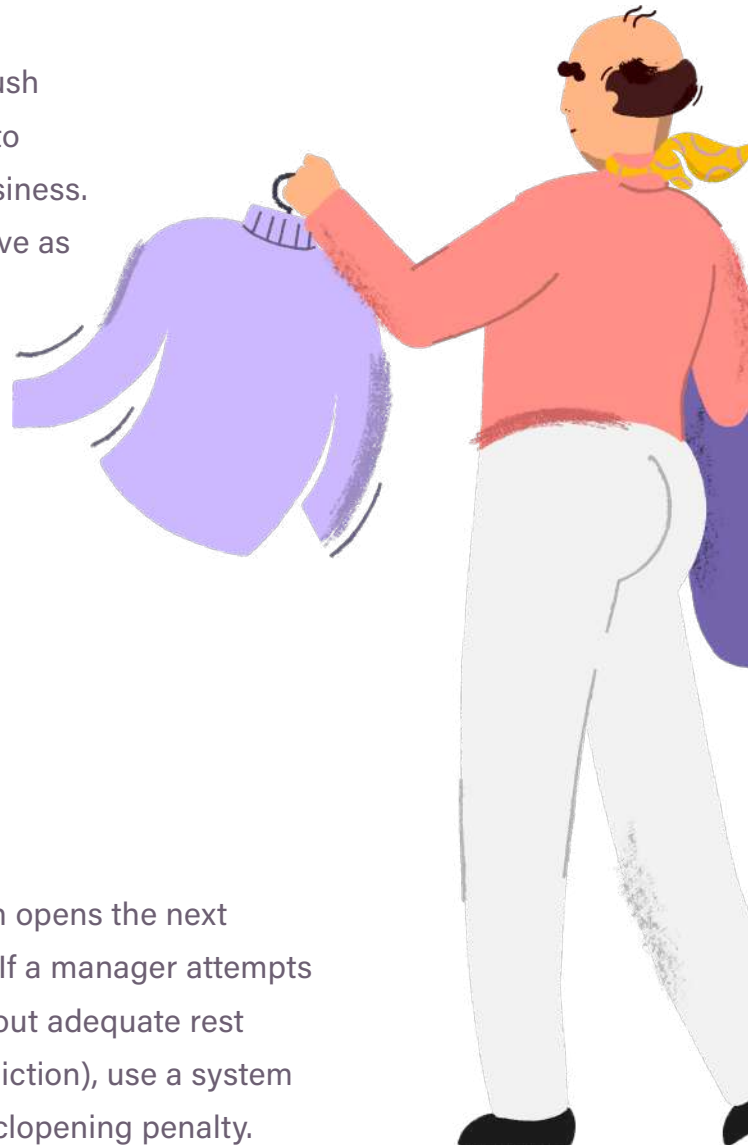
Publish schedules to staff via email, SMS, and push notification at the click of a button. Then export to print so you can post a physical copy at your business. While conditions are dynamic, you should still give as much advance notice of shifts as possible.

RECORD CHANGES SO BOTH MANAGERS AND STAFF CAN SEE THEM

Once a schedule is published, use a workforce management system that dynamically tracks changes made within the advance notice period.

CUT OUT CLOPENINGS

Cloping is when an employee closes, and then opens the next day with insufficient time to rest between shifts. If a manager attempts to schedule an employee for multiple shifts without adequate rest between (the hours required shifts vary by jurisdiction), use a system that warns them that the schedule will trigger a cloping penalty.



Restating the shift work landscape

If you don't understand what drives your team — or how that compares to industry standards — you could be wasting time and money investing in the wrong tools or training.

Shift workers are still engaged and motivated in 2020, considering the challenges of the last year. But to help them be their best at work in 2021, managers need to step up their game. That means using technology to support communication and providing employees with both transparency and control over their schedules, timesheets, and pay.

Finally, managers need to champion and recognize their team's work. When 96% of shift workers believe they deserve more respect, there's a lot of room for growth.

Looking ahead

Review your COVID-19 protocols, evaluate your employee's satisfaction, and identify opportunities for improvement based on what you've learned in this report. Then rely on a workforce management system with automated scheduling, compliance check points, and built-in reports so you can track your progress.

Shift workers are everyday heroes. The unsung champions who make life easier for their community. To keep your team motivated, to show your investment and respect for their work, try a workforce management system that puts both managers and their employees first. Sign up for a [free trial of Deputy](#) to see why employees feel more empowered with [streamlined scheduling](#).

