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Overtime, Double Time and the 7th-Day Rule for Security Guards

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California security guards generally earn 1.5x pay after 8 hours in a day or 40 in a week, 2x pay after 12 hours in a day, and premium pay on a seventh consecutive day worked in a single workweek.

Why long posts trigger overtime questions

Security staffing often relies on extended shifts, mandatory holdovers, and back-to-back posts, which can push guards past California's daily and weekly overtime thresholds quickly.

Because California uses a daily overtime standard, not just a weekly one, a single long shift can trigger overtime even if the guard's total weekly hours are otherwise modest.

Overtime and double time thresholds

Trigger	Rate	Notes
Over 8 hours in a workday	1.5x regular rate	Applies even if weekly total stays under 40
Over 40 hours in a workweek	1.5x regular rate	Standard weekly overtime
Over 12 hours in a workday	2x regular rate	Double time applies to hours beyond 12
7th consecutive day in a workweek	1.5x first 8 hours, 2x hours beyond 8	Must be the same defined workweek

Common issues on guard posts

- Being asked to 'hold over' for a no-show relief guard without overtime being calculated correctly
- Alternative workweek schedules (e.g. 4x10) being applied without a valid election process
- Split shifts or double posts on the same calendar day being treated as separate, non-overtime shifts
- Misclassifying a guard as exempt to avoid paying overtime

What to document

Keep your own log of clock-in and clock-out times, especially for holdover or split-shift days, and save copies of your pay stubs each pay period.

Research and education only

This page offers general research and education about California overtime rules as they may apply to security work. Summit Force Security Group is not a law firm and does not provide legal advice or representation.

For questions about your own overtime pay, contact the California Labor Commissioner's Office or a licensed California employment attorney.

Quick answers

Does California pay overtime after 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week?

Both — overtime applies after 8 hours in a workday and separately after 40 hours in a workweek, whichever produces overtime first.

What triggers double time for a guard?

Working beyond 12 hours in a single workday, or working the 7th consecutive day of a workweek beyond 8 hours, generally triggers double time.

Can a security company use a 4x10 schedule to avoid daily overtime?

Only under a properly adopted alternative workweek schedule following a specific election process; otherwise standard daily overtime rules apply.

Are all guards eligible for overtime?

Most security officers are non-exempt hourly employees entitled to overtime; true exemptions are narrow and fact-specific.

What if a paycheck seems to miss overtime hours?

Compare your own time log against the pay stub and consider filing a wage claim with the Labor Commissioner if the discrepancy is not resolved.

Primary sources — read the official text

Labor Code Section 510	California Legislative Information	https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=510.&lawCode=LAB
Overtime FAQ	California DLSE	https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/faq_overtime.htm
IWC Wage Order 4-2001	California DIR	https://www.dir.ca.gov/iwc/wageorderindustries.htm
Overtime Compensation	U.S. Department of Labor	https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/overtime

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