

# Why should we bother having employees sign their time cards?

**Q: “Is there merit to having employees sign their time cards? Is it important to have a certification that the hours shown represent an accurate accounting of time worked? Is there any type of liability if the employee simply uses an automated system of hand or card swipes and never 'approves' their time, either automatically in the computer timekeeping system like ADP or in writing on a printed timesheet? What might be the issue if this does not happen?” - Kary, Maryland**

**A:** Yes, it is a best practice to have employees review and sign their time cards showing hours worked, regardless of whether the employee is signing a handwritten summary or reviewing a summary that is kept by mechanical or electronic means. Employees may file claims for unpaid overtime up to three years after the actual time was worked, and to avoid surprises, most employers ask employees to certify that the hours worked are correct.

Although software that tracks employee hours is very convenient, if it is set to automatically deduct meal or rest breaks, for example, and the employee actually worked through a break, then the employee may have good cause to claim that he or she was underpaid at some future point. For that reason, reasonable steps to ensure that each individual affirms the accuracy of his or her time card are a good idea.