

# Equal Pay Day: Run audit to check compliance

Today is Equal Pay Day in America. If you don't know, this day is to bring awareness to the gender pay gap. The date is chosen based off an average calculation of how much longer into the year a woman must work to earn what her male counterpart made in the previous year.

So, why not take this day to double-check your Equal Pay Act compliance?

Complying with the Equal Pay Act of 1963 is quite simple because the law itself is straightforward. Employers cannot pay different wages on the basis of gender for “equal work on jobs the performance of which requires equal skill, effort, and responsibility and which are performed under similar working conditions....” Women must also receive the same level of benefits as men.

Although the EPA has been in effect for more than a half century, men and women performing the same jobs often still receive different salaries.

Answer the following questions to see if your organization’s policies violate the EPA:

- Are women and men differently compensated for doing similar work, discounting variations based on credentials or experience?
- Does your wage classification system differentiate between “male” and “female” workers?
- Do you use “head of household,” “head of family” or “principal wage earner” classifications to justify higher pay or different benefits?
- Do you use a collective bargaining agreement to justify unequal rates?
- Do you provide different benefits based on gender?
- Does your retirement plan differentiate on the basis of gender in optional retirement ages?

If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, you may have a hard time defending an action brought against you under the Equal Pay Act.