Easter Sunday trading in Waipā

What businesses need to know about the Easter Sunday shop trading consultation

Waipā District Council wants to hear what people think about whether shops across the district should be able to choose to open on Easter Sunday. If you run a shop and might want to open on Easter Sunday 2027, there are some important dates and steps to plan for now – particularly around notifying your staff.

The options

Council is seeking feedback on two options.

Option 1: Adopt a district-wide Easter Sunday Shop Trading Policy. If adopted:

- Shops anywhere in Waipā could **choose** to open on Easter Sunday – no shop would have to open
- Council would not control which types of shops can open or set opening hours
- The policy would apply to **Easter Sunday only** – Good Friday would remain a restricted trading day, and Easter Monday would remain a public holiday
- Other legal requirements, such as alcohol licensing under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012, would still apply
- Every shop employee would keep the right to refuse to work on Easter Sunday.

Option 2: Status quo – no policy. Easter Sunday trading would stay as it is now, with only shops that are already allowed to open under national law able to do so.

Some shops – such as dairies, service stations, cafés and restaurants, pharmacies and garden centres – can already open on Easter Sunday under existing law. This consultation is about whether other shops should also be able to choose to open.

Key dates

Date	What happens
Monday 2 November 2026	Consultation opens
5pm Wednesday 2 December 2026	Consultation closes
Wednesday 27 January 2027	Hearing for people who want to speak to their submission, and deliberations.
Sunday 31 January 2027	Earliest date shops that can already open on Easter Sunday can give staff written notice of their right to refuse to work (8 weeks before)

Wednesday 10 February 2027	**Council decision on whether to adopt the policy**
Sunday 28 February 2027	**Last day for employers to give staff written notice (4 weeks before Easter Sunday)**
Sunday 28 March 2027	Easter Sunday

Heads up: there will be a short window to notify staff

If Council adopts the policy on **Wednesday 10 February 2027**, businesses that want staff to work on Easter Sunday will have **just over two weeks** – until **Sunday 28 February 2027** – to give every employee written notice of their right to refuse to work.

If notice isn't given correctly and on time, you won't be able to rely on that employee working on Easter Sunday.

Your obligations as an employer

These requirements come from the Shop Trading Hours Act 1990. They apply to **all shop employees** – including staff in shops that can already open (such as dairies and service stations).

- **Give written notice.** If you want an employee to work on Easter Sunday, you must tell them in writing that they have the right to refuse. This can be a letter delivered in person, an email, or another method set out in their employment agreement.
- **Get the timing right.** Notice must be given no earlier than 8 weeks and no later than 4 weeks before Easter Sunday. If your shop can already open on Easter Sunday, that means between **Sunday 31 January** and **Sunday 28 February 2027**. If your shop could only open under a new policy, you won't be able to give notice until the policy is adopted – so if Council adopts it on **Wednesday 10 February 2027**, you'll need to give notice between then and **Sunday 28 February 2027**.
- **New staff.** If someone starts working for you within 4 weeks of Easter Sunday, you must give them notice as close to their start date as possible.
- **Every year.** This process must be followed each year you want staff to work on Easter Sunday.
- **No reason needed.** Employees don't have to give a reason for refusing to work, and you must not treat them less favourably for refusing. Doing so could lead to a personal grievance.
- **Pay.** Easter Sunday is not a public holiday, so employees who work are not entitled to time and a half or a day in lieu (unless their employment agreement says otherwise).

What employees need to do

An employee who doesn't want to work on Easter Sunday must tell their employer in writing **within 14 days** of receiving the employer's notice. For example, if you give notice on 28 February 2027, staff have until 14 March 2027 to respond. Employees who start within 14 days of Easter Sunday need to respond as soon as reasonably practicable.

How to get ready

- Think now about whether you'd want to open on Easter Sunday 2027 if the policy is adopted.

- Draft your written notice to staff and check how notices must be given under your employment agreements.
- Keep an eye out for Council's decision on 10 February 2027.
- If the policy is adopted, send notices to staff as soon as possible and no later than Sunday 28 February 2027.
- Plan your rosters around any staff who choose not to work.
- If you're unsure about your obligations, check with Employment New Zealand or get your own employment advice.

Have your say

We want to hear from businesses, employees and the wider community. Submissions open on **Monday 2 November 2026** and close at **5pm Wednesday 2 December 2026**. [Insert link here].

More information

Read the full Statement of Proposal at https://letstalk.waipadc.govt.nz/. For detailed guidance on employer and employee obligations, visit Working and trading on Easter Sunday – Employment New Zealand.