

COMPLIANCE 2026

Right to Disconnect: After-Hours Calls for Tradies

The right to disconnect now covers small business, and it lands hardest on the trades and field teams who genuinely need someone reachable after hours.

Since **26 August 2025** the right to disconnect covers small business employers (fewer than 15 staff), bringing roughly **5.4 million** more employees under the rule. It lets a worker **refuse to monitor or respond to** work contact outside hours *unless that refusal is unreasonable*, it is **not a ban**, and genuine emergencies are excluded. For tradies and on-call teams the safe path is to stop routing after-hours calls to personal mobiles and instead run a proper call flow: an **after-hours AI phone agent** that triages true emergencies from routine, a **fair on-call roster**, the business number kept **off personal devices**, and **everything logged**. This is the on-call deep-dive companion to our main right-to-disconnect explainer. General information, not legal advice.

■ The short version

Step	Old habit	Compliant setup
Emergency vs routine	✗ Human has to answer to find out	✓ Triage'd automatically before escalation
On-call rotation	~ Ad-hoc, usually the boss	✓ Fair, rostered, compensated
Record of contact	✗ Nothing but memory	✓ Logged, transcribed, time-stamped

■ Key points

- Set up an after-hours flow that sorts real from routine
- Stay reachable for emergencies, not for everything

General information, not legal advice

This article explains how the right to disconnect tends to play out for on-call and field work, and the phone setup that helps. It is not legal advice. For your own roster, awards and contracts, check the **Fair Work Ombudsman** guidance or get advice specific to your business.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ Does the right to disconnect stop me calling my tradies after hours in an emergency?
- ☐ When did the right to disconnect start applying to small businesses?
- ☐ How do I know if contacting a worker after hours is "reasonable"?
- ☐ How can an AI phone agent help me stay compliant?
- ☐ How do I keep the business number off my staff's personal mobiles?
- ☐ What's the difference between this and your main right-to-disconnect article?

This is the summary. The guide has the detail.

Every point above is worked through in full on our site, with the Australian context, the numbers and the exceptions. If you would rather talk it through, call **1300 663 222** or visit vocphone.com/about/contact-us.