

### Topic

## Because a day only has 24 hours

The coalition agreement has brought it back into discussion, with employers and sometimes even employees repeatedly criticizing it for being too rigid: The Working Hours Act (Arbeitszeitgesetz, ArbZG). We take a closer look: What does it actually say and why?

Because exceptions for shift work or hazardous work are not relevant for us, we can focus on three aspects from a KAAT perspective: Maximum daily working hours, the right to breaks and rest periods (Ruhezeiten). We explain exactly **what** the law regulates in the Service section on page 2.

But **why** does the Working Hours Act regulate these aspects? § 1 makes it clear that the purpose of the law is to protect the health and safety of employees. That is why, for example, there are maximum daily working hours. Ergonomic studies have shown that the frequency of errors and accidents increases significantly after eight hours of work. KAAT employees do not usually work with dangerous machines, so serious accidents at work are unlikely. But a slip in the laboratory can have unpleasant consequences, too, and a mistake in a calculation



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can be very embarrassing to say the least. And nobody needs an accident on the way home.

Our lives follow rhythms. Effort must be followed by recovery, stress as a permanent condition makes us ill. The Working Hours Act is based on this knowledge. With the clear aim of ensuring that we can still work healthily tomorrow.

### Other topics in this issue

Regulated clearly: Working time

The 5th KAAT Dialogue

Focus on working time

Curtain up for KAAT Hub No. 4

Ways out of meeting monotony

AT or not AT?

Works council elections: Ready for 2026!

AI for beginners



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### Pressing questions

What questions are you particularly concerned about? This is a question that is constantly on our minds. For our upcoming conference – the 5th KAAT Dialogue in Hanover in July – we asked for direct feedback: We asked the participants of KAAT Dialogues 1 to 4 what they are particularly interested in. From this, we put together the program that in turn shapes this newsletter. We hope that there is at least one topic that is of particular interest to you, too.

Come to the KAAT Dialog, find out more about “your” topics and get to know us and all the other “KAATies” in person.

And if you don’t have time at the beginning of July: You can always write to us with your pressing questions:  
**[kontakt@kaat.net](mailto:kontakt@kaat.net)**.

But now: Enjoy reading the 19th KAAT Newsletter!

## Service

# Regulated clearly: Working time

These points relevant to you are regulated in the Working Hours Act (Arbeitszeitgesetz, ArbZG):

**Maximum daily working hours (§ 3):** They must not exceed eight hours. However, the law is not that rigid: the very next sentence states that the maximum daily working hours can be extended to up to ten hours – provided that the average daily working hours do not exceed eight hours within a 24-week period. This means that working longer is fine temporarily, e.g. to complete a project on time. However, this period of working more must be followed by a phase of shorter working hours to compensate.

**The right to breaks (§ 4):** There must be a break after six hours of work at the latest. Employees who work between six and nine hours are entitled to a break of at least 30 minutes, and at least 45 minutes if they work longer. The break time can be split up – however, to ensure that employees can actually do something with their break, the individual breaks must not be shorter than 15 minutes. And very important: the break time is not part of working time.



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**The rest period (§ 5):** After a working day, employees must have an uninterrupted rest period of at least eleven hours. In terms of duration, this rest period is therefore between work breaks and vacation. You could also call it “time to live”, because it is there for everything that makes up our everyday lives beyond work: family and household, eating and sleeping, friends and hobbies. And that in a predictable way, usually in the evening and at night and not “fragmented” by emails or meetings.

## Events

### The 5th KAAT Dialogue



The event starts on **July 4 at 12 noon** with a light lunch and ends on **July 5 at around 1 p.m.**, also with a lunch.



#### Registration

Please register as soon as possible so that we can adjust the number of rooms accordingly!



[More Info and registration ...](#)



Our conference takes place at  
**IGBCE Hauptverwaltung** am  
Königsworther Platz 6, 30167 Hannover

The evening event will take place at Leonardo Hotel Hannover, Tiergartenstraße 117, where we will also be staying overnight.

The event addresses commercial, academic and non-tariff (AT) members as well as works councils and stop stewards representing KAAT employees. Participation, overnights stay and meals at the event are free of charge for our members. We will also reimburse travel costs as part of our travel expenses policy. However, loss of earnings cannot be reimbursed.

## Focus on working time

As simple as the key points of the Working Hours Act may seem, the devil is in the detail when it comes to working hours, for example: Does my employer have to set up a system enabling the duration of my time worked each day to be measured or does an exception apply to me? What are the consequences if I demand payment for overtime and my employer has not recorded my working hours? Can my boss

contact me in my free time? And much more. In the **workshop “Focus on working time” at the 5th KAAT Dialogue**, we will therefore examine the legal basis in more detail and look at current studies. This will enable us to jointly assess the extent to which current attempts by politicians to make working time more flexible actually serve the interests of companies **and** employees!

## From the regions

### Curtain up for KAAT Hub No. 4

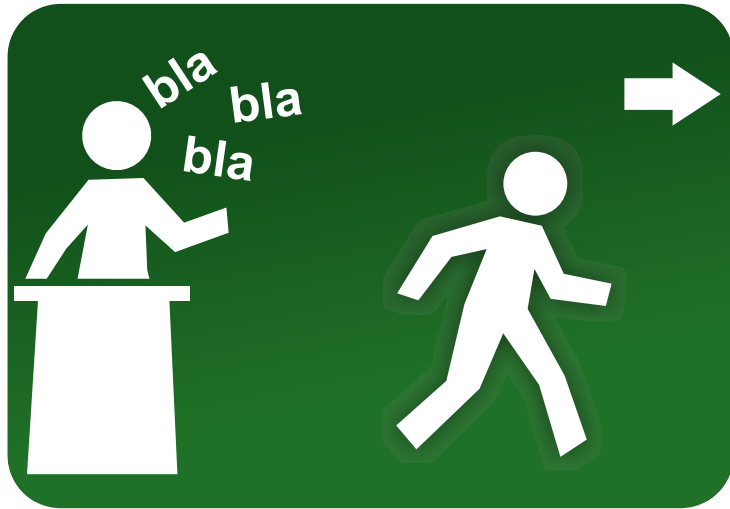
In each of the last three issues of our newsletter, we presented one of the four new KAAT hubs: IGBCE secretaries who do KAAT work exclusively, in regions with a particularly high number of KAAT employees. According to Adam Riese, one hub remains. To heighten the tension a little, we will introduce it **at the KAAT Dialogue**: Both the region and the colleague who will be looking after it.



Picture: Moddy / AdobeStock

## Service

### Ways out of meeting monotony



Picture: Fiedels / AdobeStock

Do you sit in endless meetings every day? The meetings seem interchangeable and in the evening you often wonder what it was all about? It's time to change that! Whether in the role of organizer or participant, we'll show you ways out of the meeting monotony. Because there are numerous ways to make the exchange more interactive and lively and, at the same time, to achieve better results. If you are interested in this topic, the **workshop "Meetings with a difference: more creativity, less blah blah!" at the 5th KAAT Dialogue** is just the thing for you. After a brief input, we will use examples to develop new meeting concepts, explore creative solutions and take the opportunity to really make meetings different!

## Legal

### AT or not AT?

Your possible status as non-tariff (**außertariflich**, AT) always depends on your specific position and the respective collective agreement defining the boundary between employees covered by the agreement and those who are not. We have therefore often emphasized "No AT without T!". However, a simple look at the relevant collective agreement is usually not enough to determine whether you have an effective AT employment relationship. In our **workshop "AT or not AT, that is the question" at the 5th KAAT Dialogue**, we will take a closer look. The decisive factor is the interplay between collective agreements, possibly works agreements (Betriebsvereinbarungen) and the individual employment contract. In addition, works agreements and employment contracts can use reference clauses to apply collectively agreed regulations to the AT employee, meaning that individual AT working conditions can look very different. This is a complex topic that we will address together in Hanover in July.



Picture: Meow Creations / AdobeStock

## Service

# Works council elections: Ready for 2026!



Next year, the regular works council elections will take place all over Germany. Every four years it is time to inform and mobilize to get as many employees as possible to the ballot box. In the **workshop “Works council elections: Ready for 2026!” at the 5th KAAT Dialogue**, we will take a look at the campaign and materials for next year – and how they can be applied in our companies. At the KAAT dialogue, we are focusing on one

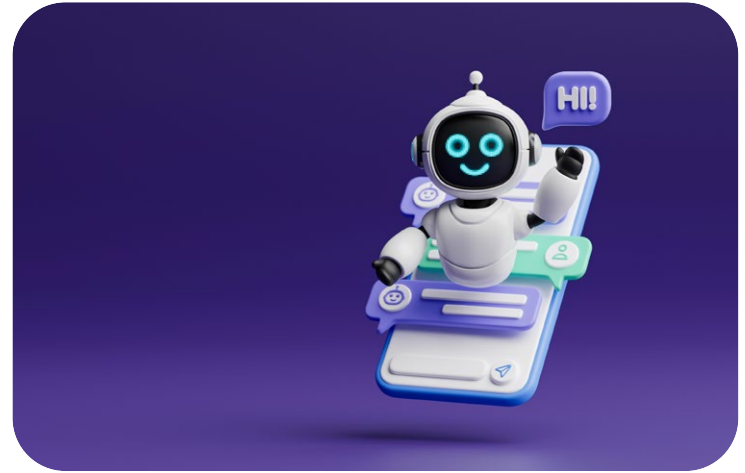
question in particular: How do we attract KAAT employees to run for office and to vote? With practical tips, convincing arguments and proven strategies, we show how these groups can be addressed. Together we develop ideas to get more people excited about co-determination!

## Digital

# AI for beginners

Did you already use ChatGPT or Copilot to draft emails? How often do you use summary tools to get a quick overview of complex topics? AI tools are appearing more and more frequently in everyday work. Many make work easier, but at the same time they raise new questions.

In the **workshop “AI for beginners – What is there besides ChatGPT, what can you use, what should you look out for?” at the 5th KAAT Dialogue** we will explore the question: What is AI really capable of? What are benefits to everyday work and what are downfalls? This workshop will give an easy insight into the topic. We will look at where AI is already being used in companies, what it can do in concrete terms – and where it is important to have a closer look. We will get to know various tools, discuss their use and get a feeling for where their use makes sense. We also talk about topics such as



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data protection, copyright and typical pitfalls when dealing with AI – in an understandable and practice-oriented way.



All information about the 5th KAAT Dialogue and our workshops can be found here ...



**WIR SIND KAAT.net - MACH MIT!**

## Imprint

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