Custom Workweeks: When Saturday-Sunday Is Not the Weekend

> A business-day calculation that assumes Saturday and Sunday are always the non-working days gets the wrong answer anywhere that uses a different workweek.

The Monday-through-Friday, Saturday-Sunday-weekend pattern is common but not universal. A number of countries and industries use a Sunday-through-Thursday workweek, a rotating shift-based schedule with no fixed weekend at all, or a compressed workweek (four longer days). Any business-day calculation that hardcodes "Saturday and Sunday are excluded" rather than accepting the actual applicable workweek definition will misclassify working and non-working days for anyone using a different pattern.

Monday-Friday workweek



Sunday-Thursday workweek



The same seven calendar days are split into working and non-working days differently depending on which workweek pattern applies.

Why "weekend" is a configuration, not a constant

A workweek pattern is simply a statement of which weekdays are working days and which are not. Monday-Friday/Saturday-Sunday is the most common pattern in wide use, but it is one specific choice among several, and the correct one for a given business-day calculation depends entirely on the country, industry, or organization the calculation is actually being performed for.

How this compounds with holiday exclusions

A custom workweek and a holiday calendar are independent settings that both need to be correct together. Using the right holiday list but the wrong workweek pattern (or vice versa) produces a business-day count that is wrong in a way that can be harder to notice than either error alone, since the result still looks like a plausible business-day count.

What WhenMath's engines accept

The Custom Workweek Calculator and every other business-day engine on WhenMath accept an explicit set of working weekdays as an input rather than hardcoding Saturday and Sunday as the only possible non-working days, so a Sunday-Thursday or other pattern produces a correct result without any workaround.

Key takeaway. The set of non-working weekdays is a configuration that varies by country and industry, not a universal constant. Confirm the applicable workweek pattern before trusting a business-day count for an unfamiliar context.

Frequently asked

Can a workweek have more or fewer than 5 working days?

Yes, a compressed 4-day workweek and a 6-day workweek are both real patterns in use, and a custom workweek setting can represent either, not just a swap of which 5 days are the working days.

What about rotating shift schedules with no fixed weekend?

A rotating pattern with no consistent weekly weekend is a different kind of schedule from a fixed custom workweek. The Rotating Shift Pattern Planner in the work-hours category handles that case specifically rather than the business-day engines' fixed-weekday-pattern model.

Does a custom workweek change which days count as "the weekend" for date-range inclusivity purposes?

No, date-range inclusivity (covered in its own resource above) is about whether the start or end date of a range counts at all, which is independent of which specific weekdays are classified as working or non-working.

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