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Wage and Hour Division

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Wage and Hour Division (WHD)

(Revised July 2008) ([PDF](#))

Fact Sheet #23: Overtime Pay Requirements of the FLSA

This fact sheet provides general information concerning the application of the [overtime pay](#) provisions of the [FLSA](#).

Characteristics

An employer who requires or permits an employee to work overtime is generally required to pay the employee premium pay for such overtime work.

Requirements

Unless specifically exempted, employees covered by the Act must receive overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 40 in a workweek at a rate not less than time and one-half their regular rates of pay. There is no limit in the Act on the number of hours employees aged 16 and older may work in any workweek. The Act does not require [overtime pay](#) for work on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, or regular days of rest, as such.

The Act applies on a workweek basis. An employee's workweek is a fixed and regularly recurring period of 168 hours -- seven consecutive 24-hour periods. It need not coincide with the calendar week, but may begin on any day and at any hour of the day. Different workweeks may be established for different employees or groups of employees. Averaging of hours over two or more weeks is not permitted. Normally, overtime pay earned in a particular workweek must be paid on the regular pay day for the pay period in which the wages were earned.

The regular rate of pay cannot be less than the [minimum wage](#). The regular rate includes all remuneration for employment except certain payments excluded by the Act itself. Payments which are not part of the regular rate include pay for expenses incurred on the employer's behalf, premium payments for overtime work or the true premiums paid for work on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, discretionary bonuses, gifts and payments in the nature of gifts on special occasions, and payments for occasional periods when no work is performed due to vacation, holidays, or illness.

Earnings may be determined on a piece-rate, salary, commission, or some other basis, but in all such cases the overtime pay due must be computed on the basis of the average hourly rate derived from such earnings. This is calculated by dividing the total pay for employment (except for the statutory exclusions noted above) in any workweek by the total number of hours actually worked.

Where an employee in a single workweek works at two or more different types of work for which different straight-time rates have been established, the regular rate for that week is the weighted average of such rates. That is, the earnings from all such rates are added together and this total is then divided by the total number of hours worked at all jobs. In addition, section 7(g)(2) of the FLSA allows, under specified conditions, the computation of overtime pay based on one and one-half times the hourly rate in effect when the overtime work is performed. The requirements for computing overtime pay pursuant to section 7(g)(2) are prescribed in [29 CFR 778.415](#) through [778.421](#).

Where non-cash payments are made to employees in the form of goods or facilities, the reasonable cost to the employer or fair value of such goods or facilities must be included in the regular rate.

Typical Problems

Fixed Sum for Varying Amounts of Overtime: A lump sum paid for work performed during overtime hours without regard to the number of overtime hours worked does not qualify as an overtime premium even though the amount of money paid is equal to or greater than the sum owed on a per-hour basis. For example, no part of a flat sum of \$180 to employees who work overtime on Sunday will qualify as an overtime premium, even though the employees' straight-time rate is \$12.00 an hour and the employees always work less than 10 hours on Sunday. Similarly, where an agreement provides for 6 hours pay at \$13.00 an hour regardless of the time actually spent for work on a job performed during overtime hours, the entire \$78.00 must be included in determining the employees' regular rate.

Salary for Workweek Exceeding 40 Hours: A fixed salary for a regular workweek longer than 40 hours does not discharge FLSA statutory obligations. For example, an employee may be hired to work a 45 hour workweek for a weekly salary of \$405. In this instance the regular rate is obtained by dividing the \$405 straight-time salary by 45 hours, resulting in a regular rate of \$9.00. The employee is then due additional overtime computed by multiplying the 5 overtime hours by one-half the regular rate of pay ($\$4.50 \times 5 = \22.50).

Overtime Pay May Not Be Waived: The overtime requirement may not be waived by agreement between the employer and employees. An agreement that only 8 hours a day or only 40 hours a week will be counted as working time also fails the test of FLSA compliance. An announcement by the employer that no overtime work will be permitted, or that overtime work will not be paid for unless authorized in advance, also will not impair the employee's right to compensation for compensable overtime hours that are worked.

Where to Obtain Additional Information

For additional information, visit our Wage and Hour Division Website: <http://www.dol.gov/whd> and/or call our toll-free information and helpline, available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in your time zone, 1-866-4USWAGE (1-866-487-9243).

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