

## Wage and Hour Division, Labor

## § 785.9

performing work subject to the provisions of the Walsh-Healey Public Contracts Act.

[35 FR 15289, Oct. 1, 1970]

### Subpart B—Principles for Determination of Hours Worked

#### § 785.5 General requirements of sections 6 and 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Section 6 requires the payment of a minimum wage by an employer to his employees who are subject to the Act. Section 7 prohibits their employment for more than a specified number of hours per week without proper overtime compensation.

[26 FR 7732, Aug. 18, 1961]

#### § 785.6 Definition of “employ” and partial definition of “hours worked”.

By statutory definition the term “employ” includes (section 3(g)) “to suffer or permit to work.” The act, however, contains no definition of “work”. Section 3(o) of the Fair Labor Standards Act contains a partial definition of “hours worked” in the form of a limited exception for clothes-changing and wash-up time.

#### § 785.7 Judicial construction.

The United States Supreme Court originally stated that employees subject to the act must be paid for all time spent in “physical or mental exertion (whether burdensome or not) controlled or required by the employer and pursued necessarily and primarily for the benefit of the employer of his business.” (*Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Co. v. Muscoda Local No. 123*, 321 U. S. 590 (1944)) Subsequently, the Court ruled that there need be no exertion at all and that all hours are hours worked which the employee is required to give his employer, that “an employer, if he chooses, may hire a man to do nothing, or to do nothing but wait for something to happen. Refraining from other activity often is a factor of instant readiness to serve, and idleness plays a part in all employments in a stand-by capacity. Readiness to serve may be hired, quite as much as service itself, and time spent lying in wait for threats to the safety of the employer’s

property may be treated by the parties as a benefit to the employer.” (*Armour & Co. v. Wantock*, 323 U.S. 126 (1944); *Skidmore v. Swift*, 323 U.S. 134 (1944)) The workweek ordinarily includes “all the time during which an employee is necessarily required to be on the employer’s premises, on duty or at a prescribed work place”. (*Anderson v. Mt. Clemens Pottery Co.*, 328 U.S. 680 (1946)) The Portal-to-Portal Act did not change the rule except to provide an exception for preliminary and postliminary activities. See § 785.34.

#### § 785.8 Effect of custom, contract, or agreement.

The principles are applicable, even though there may be a custom, contract, or agreement not to pay for the time so spent with special statutory exceptions discussed in §§ 785.9 and 785.26.

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#### § 785.9 Statutory exemptions.

(a) *The Portal-to-Portal Act.* The Portal-to-Portal Act (secs. 1-13, 61 Stat. 84-89, 29 U.S.C. 251-262) eliminates from working time certain travel and walking time and other similar “preliminary” and “postliminary” activities performed “prior” or “subsequent” to the “workday” that are not made compensable by contract, custom, or practice. It should be noted that “preliminary” activities do not include “principal” activities. See §§ 790.6 to 790.8 of this chapter. Section 4 of the Portal-to-Portal Act does not affect the computation of hours worked within the “workday”. “Workday” in general, means the period between “the time on any particular workday at which such employee commences (his) principal activity or activities” and “the time on any particular workday at which he ceases such principal activity or activities.” The “workday” may thus be longer than the employee’s scheduled shift, hours, tour of duty, or time on the production line. Also, its duration may vary from day to day depending upon when the employee commences or ceases his “principal” activities. With respect to time spent in any “preliminary” or “postliminary” activity compensable by contract, custom, or practice, the Portal-to-Portal Act requires