

**PART 525—EMPLOYMENT OF
WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES
UNDER SPECIAL CERTIFICATES**

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§ 525.1 Introduction.

The Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1986 (Pub. L. 99-486, 100 Stat. 1229) substantially revised those provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 201) (FLSA) permitting the employment of individuals disabled for the work to be performed (workers with disabilities) at special minimum wage rates below the rate that would otherwise be required by statute. These provisions are codified at section 14(c) of the FLSA and:

(a) Provide for the employment under certificates of individuals with disabilities at special minimum wage rates which are commensurate with those paid to workers not disabled for the work to be performed employed in the vicinity for essentially the same type, quality, and quantity of work;

(b) Require employers to provide written assurances that wage rates of individuals paid on an hourly rate basis be reviewed at least once every six months and that the wages of all employees be reviewed at least annually to reflect changes in the prevailing wages paid to experienced individuals not disabled for the work to be per-

formed employed in the locality for essentially the same type of work;

(c) Prohibit employers from reducing the wage rates prescribed by certificate in effect on June 1, 1986, for two years;

(d) Permit the continuance or establishment of work activities centers; and

(e) Provide that any employee receiving a special minimum wage rate pursuant to section 14(c), or the parent or guardian of such an employee, may petition for a review of that wage rate by an administrative law judge.

§ 525.2 Purpose and scope.

The regulations in this part govern the issuance of all certificates authorizing the employment of workers with disabilities at special minimum wages pursuant to section 14(c) of FLSA.

§ 525.3 Definitions.

(a) *FLSA* means the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended.

(b) *Secretary* means the Secretary of Labor or the Secretary of Labor's authorized representative.

(c) *Administrator* means the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor, or the Administrator's authorized representative.

(d) *Worker with a disability* for the purpose of this part means an individual whose earning or productive capacity is impaired by a physical or mental disability, including those relating to age or injury, for the work to be performed. Disabilities which may affect earning or productive capacity include blindness, mental illness, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, alcoholism, and drug addiction. The following, taken by themselves, are not considered disabilities for the purposes of this part: Vocational, social, cultural, or educational disabilities; chronic unemployment; receipt of welfare benefits; nonattendance at school; juvenile delinquency; and, correctional parole or probation. Further, a disability which may affect earning or productive capacity for one type of work may not affect such capacity for another.

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(e) *Patient worker* means a worker with a disability, as defined above, employed by a hospital or institution providing residential care where such worker receives treatment or care without regard to whether such worker is a resident of the establishment.

(f) *Hospital or institution*, hereafter referred to as *institution*, is a public or private, nonprofit or for-profit facility primarily engaged in (*i.e.*, more than 50 percent of the income is attributable to) providing residential care for the sick, the aged, or the mentally ill or retarded, including but not limited to nursing homes, intermediate care facilities, rest homes, convalescent homes, homes for the elderly and infirm, halfway houses, residential centers for drug addicts or alcoholics, and the like, whether licensed or not licensed.

(g) *Employ* is defined in FLSA as *to suffer or permit to work*. An employment relationship arises whenever an individual, including an individual with a disability, is suffered or permitted to work. The determination of an employment relationship does not depend upon the level of performance or whether the work is of some therapeutic benefit. However, an individual does not become an employee if engaged in such activities as making craft products where the individual voluntarily participates in such activities and the products become the property of the individual making them, or all of the funds resulting from the sale of the products are divided among the participants in the activity or are used in purchasing additional materials to make craft products.

(h) *Special minimum wage* is a wage authorized under a certificate issued to an employer under this part that is less than the statutory minimum wage.

(i) *Commensurate wage* is a special minimum wage paid to a worker with a disability which is based on the worker's individual productivity in proportion to the wage and productivity of experienced nondisabled workers performing essentially the same type, quality, and quantity of work in the vicinity in which the individual under certificate is employed. For example, the commensurate wage of a worker with a disability who is 75% as produc-

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tive as the average experienced nondisabled worker, taking into consideration the type, quality, and quantity of work of the disabled worker, would be set at 75% of the wage paid to the nondisabled worker. For purposes of these regulations, a commensurate wage is always a special minimum wage, *i.e.*, a wage below the statutory minimum.

(j) *Vicinity or locality* means the geographic area from which the labor force of the community is drawn.

(k) *Experienced worker* means a worker who has learned the basic elements or requirements of the work to be performed, ordinarily by completion of a probationary or training period. Typically, such a worker will have received at least one pay raise after successful completion of the probationary or training period.

§ 525.4 Patient workers.

With respect to patient workers, as defined in § 525.3(e), a major factor in determining if an employment relationship exists is whether the work performed is of any consequential economic benefit to the institution. Generally, work shall be considered to be of consequential economic benefit if it is of the type that workers without disabilities normally perform, in whole or in part in the institution or elsewhere. However, a patient does not become an employee if he or she merely performs personal housekeeping chores, such as maintaining his or her own quarters, or receives a token remuneration in connection with such services. It may also be possible for patients in family-like settings such as group homes to rotate or share household tasks or chores without becoming employees.

§ 525.5 Wage payments.

(a) An individual whose earning or productive capacity is not impaired for the work being performed cannot be employed under a certificate issued pursuant to this part and must be paid at least the applicable minimum wage. An individual whose earning or productive capacity is impaired to the extent that the individual is unable to earn at least the applicable minimum wage may be paid a commensurate wage, but only after the employer has obtained a

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certificate authorizing payment of special minimum wages from the appropriate office of the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor.

(b) With respect to patient workers employed in institutions, no deductions can be made from such individuals' commensurate wages to cover the cost of room, board, or other services provided by the facility. Such an individual must receive his or her wages free and clear, except for amounts deducted for taxes assessed against the employee and any voluntary wage assignments directed by the employee. (See part 531 of this title.) However, it is not the intention of these regulations to preclude the institution thereafter from assessing or collecting charges for room, board, and other services actually provided to an individual to the extent permitted by applicable Federal or State law and on the same basis as it assesses and collects from nonworking patients.

§ 525.6 Compensable time.

Individuals employed subject to this part must be compensated for all hours worked. Compensable time includes not only those hours during which the individual is actually performing productive work but also includes those hours when no work is performed but the individual is required by the employer to remain available for the next assignment. However, where the individual is completely relieved from duty and is not required to remain available for the next assignment, such time will not be considered compensable time. For example, an individual employed by a rehabilitation facility would not be engaged in a compensable activity where such individual is completely relieved from duty but is provided therapy or the opportunity to participate in an alternative program or activity in the facility not involving work and not directly related to the worker's job (*e.g.*, self-help skills training, recreation, job seeking skills training, independent living skills, or adult basic education). The burden of establishing that such hours are not compensable rests with the facility and such hours must be clearly distinguishable from compensable hours. (For further infor-

mation on compensable time in general under FLSA, see part 785 of this title.)

§ 525.7 Application for certificates.

(a) Application for a certificate may be filed by any employer with the Regional Office of the Wage and Hour Division having administrative jurisdiction over the geographic area in which the employment is to take place.

(b) The employer shall provide answers to all of the applicable questions contained on the application form provided by the Regional Office.

(c) The application shall be signed by the employer or the employer's authorized representative.

§ 525.8 Special provisions for temporary authority.

(a) Temporary authority may be granted to an employer permitting the employment of workers with disabilities pursuant to a vocational rehabilitation program of the Veterans Administration for veterans with a service-incurred disability or a vocational rehabilitation program administered by a State agency.

(b) Temporary authority is effective for 90 days from the date the appropriate section of the application form is signed and completed by the duly designated representative of the State agency or the Veterans Administration. Such authority may not be renewed or extended by the issuing agency.

(c) The signed application constitutes the temporary authority to employ workers with disabilities at special minimum wage rates. A copy of the application must be forwarded within 10 days to the appropriate Regional Office of the Wage and Hour Division. Upon receipt, the application will be reviewed and, where appropriate, a certificate will be issued by the Regional Office. Where additional information is required or certification is denied, the applicant will receive notification from the Regional Office.

§ 525.9 Criteria for employment of workers with disabilities under certificates at special minimum wage rates.

(a) In order to determine that special minimum wage rates are necessary in

order to prevent the curtailment of opportunities for employment, the following criteria will be considered:

(1) The nature and extent of the disabilities of the individuals employed as these disabilities relate to the individuals' productivity;

(2) The prevailing wages of experienced employees not disabled for the job who are employed in the vicinity in industry engaged in work comparable to that performed at the special minimum wage rate;

(3) The productivity of the workers with disabilities compared to the norm established for nondisabled workers through the use of a verifiable work measurement method (see § 525.12(h)) or the productivity of experienced nondisabled workers employed in the vicinity on comparable work; and,

(4) The wage rates to be paid to the workers with disabilities for work comparable to that performed by experienced nondisabled workers.

(b) In order to be granted a certificate authorizing the employment of workers with disabilities at special minimum wage rates, the employer must provide the following written assurances concerning such employment:

(1) In the case of individuals paid hourly rates, the special minimum wage rates will be reviewed by the employer at periodic intervals at a minimum of once every six months; and,

(2) Wages for all employees will be adjusted by the employer at periodic intervals at a minimum of once each year to reflect changes in the prevailing wages paid to experienced nondisabled individuals employed in the locality for essentially the same type of work.

§ 525.10 Prevailing wage rates.

(a) A prevailing wage rate is a wage rate that is paid to an experienced worker not disabled for the work to be performed. The Department recognizes that there may be more than one wage rate for a specific type of work in a given area. An employer must be able to demonstrate that the rate being used as prevailing for determining a commensurate wage was objectively determined according to the guidelines contained in this section.

(b) An employer whose work force primarily consists of nondisabled workers or who employs more than a token number of nondisabled workers doing similar work may use as the prevailing wage the wage rate paid to that employer's experienced nondisabled employees performing similar work. Where an agency places a worker or workers with disabilities on the premises of an employer described above, the wage paid to the employer's experienced workers may be used as prevailing.

(c) An employer whose work force primarily consists of workers disabled for the work to be performed may determine the prevailing wage by ascertaining the wage rates paid to the experienced nondisabled workers of other employers in the vicinity. Such data may be obtained by surveying comparable firms in the area that employ primarily nondisabled workers doing similar work. The firms surveyed must be representative of comparable firms in terms of wages paid to experienced workers doing similar work. The appropriate size of such a sample will depend on the number of firms doing similar work but should include no less than three firms unless there are fewer firms doing such work in the area. A comparable firm is one which is of similar size in terms of employees or which competes for or bids on contracts of a similar size or nature. Employers may contact other sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics or private or State employment services where surveys are not practical. If similar work cannot be found in the area defined by the geographic labor market, the closest comparable community may be used.

(d) The prevailing wage rate must be based upon the wage rate paid to experienced nondisabled workers as defined elsewhere in these regulations. Employment services which only provide entry level wage data are not acceptable as sources for prevailing wage information as required in these regulations.

(e) There is no prescribed method for tabulating the results of a prevailing wage survey. For example, either a weighted or unweighted average would

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be acceptable provided the employer is consistent in the methodology used.

(f) The prevailing wage must be based upon work utilizing similar methods and equipment. Where the employer is unable to obtain the prevailing wage for a specific job to be performed on the premises, such as collating documents, it would be acceptable to use as the prevailing wage the wage paid to experienced individuals employed in similar jobs such as file clerk or general office clerk, requiring the same general skill levels.

(g) The following information should be recorded in documenting the determination of prevailing wage rates:

(1) Date of contact with firm or other source;

(2) Name, address, and phone number of firm or other source contacted;

(3) Individual contacted within firm or source;

(4) Title of individual contacted;

(5) Wage rate information provided;

(6) Brief description of work for which wage information is provided;

(7) Basis for the conclusion that wage rate is not based upon an entry level position. (See also § 525.10(c).)

(h) A prevailing wage may not be less than the minimum wage specified in section 6(a) of FLSA.

§ 525.11 Issuance of certificates.

(a) Upon consideration of the criteria cited in these regulations, a special certificate may be issued.

(b) If a special minimum wage certificate is issued, a copy shall be sent to the employer. If denied, the employer will be notified in writing and told the reasons for the denial, as well as the right to petition under § 525.18.

§ 525.12 Terms and conditions of special minimum wage certificates.

(a) A special minimum wage certificate shall specify the terms and conditions under which it is granted.

(b) A special minimum wage certificate shall apply to all workers employed by the employer to which the special certificate is granted provided such workers are in fact disabled for the work they are to perform.

(c) A special minimum wage certificate shall be effective for a period to be designated by the Administrator.

Workers with disabilities may be paid wages lower than the statutory minimum wage rate set forth in section 6 of FLSA only during the effective period of the certificate.

(d) Workers paid under special minimum wage certificates shall be paid wages commensurate with those paid experienced nondisabled workers employed in the vicinity in which they are employed for essentially the same type, quality, and quantity of work.

(e) Workers with disabilities shall be paid not less than one and one-half times their regular rates of pay for all hours worked in excess of the maximum workweek applicable under section 7 of FLSA.

(f) The wages of all workers paid a special minimum wage under this part shall be adjusted by the employer at periodic intervals at a minimum of once a year to reflect changes in the prevailing wages paid to experienced individuals not disabled for the work to be performed employed in the vicinity for essentially the same type of work.

(g) Each worker with a disability and, where appropriate, a parent or guardian of the worker, shall be informed, orally and in writing, of the terms of the certificate under which such worker is employed. This requirement may be satisfied by making copies of the certificate available. Where a worker with disabilities displays an understanding of the terms of a certificate and requests that other parties not be informed, it is not necessary to inform a parent or guardian.

(h) In establishing piece rates for workers with disabilities, the following criteria shall be used:

(1) Industrial work measurement methods such as stop watch time studies, predetermined time systems, standard data, or other measurement methods (hereinafter referred to as "work measurement methods") shall be used by the employer to establish standard production rates of workers not disabled for the work to be performed. The Department will accept the use of whatever method an employer chooses to use. However, the employer has the responsibility of demonstrating that a particular method is generally accepted by industrial

engineers and has been properly executed. No specific training or certification will be required. Where work measurement methods have already been applied by another employer or source, and documentation exists to show that the methods used are the same, it is not necessary to repeat these methods to establish production standards.

(i) The piece rates shall be based on the standard production rates (number of units an experienced worker not disabled for the work is expected to produce per hour) and the prevailing industry wage rate paid experienced nondisabled workers in the vicinity for essentially the same type and quality of work or for work requiring similar skill. (Prevailing industry wage rate divided by the standard number of units per hour equals the piece rate.)

(ii) Piece rates shall not be less than the prevailing piece rates paid experienced workers not disabled for the work doing the same or similar work in the vicinity when such piece rates exist and can be compared with the actual employment situations of the workers with disabilities.

(2) Any work measurement method used to establish piece rates shall be verifiable through the use of established industrial work measurement techniques.

(i) If stop watch time studies are made, they shall be made with a person or persons whose productivity represents normal or near normal performance. If their productivity does not represent normal or near normal performance, adjustments of performance shall be made. Such adjustments, sometimes called "performance rating" or "leveling" shall be made only by a person knowledgeable in this technique, as evidenced by successful completion of training in this area. The persons observed should be given time to practice the work to be performed in order to provide them with an opportunity to overcome the initial learning curve. The persons observed shall be trained to use the specific work method and tools which are available to workers with disabilities employed under special minimum wage certificates.

(ii) Appropriate time shall be allowed for personal time, fatigue, and unavoidable delays. Generally, not less than 15% allowances (9-10 minutes per hour) shall be used in conducting time studies.

(iii) Work measurements shall be conducted using the same work method that will be utilized by the workers with disabilities. When modifications such as jigs or fixtures are made to production methods to accommodate special needs of individual workers with disabilities, additional work measurements need not be conducted where the modifications enable the workers with disabilities to perform the work or increase productivity but would impede a worker without disabilities. Where workers with disabilities do not have a method available to them, as for example where an adequate number of machines are not available, a second work measurement should be conducted.

(i) Each worker with a disability employed on a piece rate basis should be paid full earnings. Employers may "pool" earnings only where piece rates cannot be established for each individual worker. An example of this situation is a team production operation where each worker's individual contribution to the finished product cannot be determined separately. However, in such situations, the employer should make every effort to objectively divide the earnings according to the productivity level of each individual worker.

(j) The following terms shall be met for workers with disabilities employed at hourly rates:

(1) Hourly rates shall be based upon the prevailing hourly wage rates paid to experienced workers not disabled for the job doing essentially the same type of work and using similar methods or equipment in the vicinity. (See also § 525.10.)

(2) An initial evaluation of a worker's productivity shall be made within the first month after employment begins in order to determine the worker's commensurate wage rate. The results of the evaluation shall be recorded and the worker's wages shall be adjusted accordingly no later than the first complete pay period following the initial evaluation. Each worker is entitled

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to commensurate wages for all hours worked. Where the wages paid to the worker during pay periods prior to the initial evaluation were less than the commensurate wage indicated by the evaluation, the employer must compensate the worker for any such difference unless it can be demonstrated that the initial payments reflected the commensurate wage due at that time.

(3) Upon completion of not more than six months of employment, a review shall be made with respect to the quantity and quality of work of each hourly-rated worker with a disability as compared to that of nondisabled workers engaged in similar work or work requiring similar skills and the findings shall be recorded. The worker's productivity shall then be reviewed and the findings recorded at least every 6 months thereafter. A review and recording of productivity shall also be made after a worker changes jobs and at least every 6 months thereafter. The worker's wages shall be adjusted accordingly no later than the first complete pay period following each review. Conducting reviews at six-month intervals should be viewed as a minimum requirement since workers with disabilities are entitled to commensurate wages for all hours worked. Reviews must be conducted in a manner and frequency to insure payment of commensurate wages. For example, evaluations should not be conducted before a worker has had an opportunity to become familiar with the job or at a time when the worker is fatigued or subject to conditions that result in less than normal productivity.

(4) Each review should contain, as a minimum and in addition to the data cited above, the following: name of the individual being reviewed; date and time of the review; and, name and position of the individual doing the review.

§ 525.13 Renewal of special minimum wage certificates.

(a) Applications may be filed for renewal of special minimum wage certificates.

(b) If an application for renewal has been properly and timely filed, an existing special minimum wage certificate shall remain in effect until the ap-

plication for renewal has been granted or denied.

(c) Workers with disabilities may not continue to be paid special minimum wages after notice that an application for renewal has been denied.

(d) Except in cases of willfulness or those in which the public interest requires otherwise, before an application for renewal is denied facts or conduct which may warrant such action shall be called to the attention of the employer in writing and such employer shall be afforded an opportunity to demonstrate or achieve compliance with all legal requirements.

§ 525.14 Posting of notices.

Every employer having workers who are employed under special minimum wage certificates shall at all times display and make available to employees a poster as prescribed and supplied by the Administrator. The Administrator will make available, upon request, posters in other formats such as Braille or recorded tapes. Such a poster will explain, in general terms, the conditions under which special minimum wages may be paid and shall be posted in a conspicuous place on the employer's premises where it may be readily observed by the workers with disabilities, the parents and guardians of such workers, and other workers. Where an employer finds it inappropriate to post such a notice, this requirement may be satisfied by providing the poster directly to all employees subject to its terms.

§ 525.15 Industrial homework.

(a) Where the employer is an organization or institution carrying out a recognized program of rehabilitation for workers with disabilities and holds a special certificate issued pursuant to this part, certification under regulations governing the employment of industrial homeworkers (29 CFR part 530) is not required.

(b) For all other types of employers, special rules apply to the employment of homeworkers in the following industries: Jewelry manufacturing, knitted outerwear, gloves and mittens, buttons and buckles, handkerchief manufacturing, embroideries, and women's apparel. (See 29 CFR part 530.)

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§ 525.16 Records to be kept by employers.

Every employer, or where appropriate (in the case of records verifying the workers' disabilities) the referring agency or facility, of workers employed under special minimum wage certificates shall maintain and have available for inspection records indicating:

(a) Verification of the workers' disabilities;

(b) Evidence of the productivity of each worker with a disability gathered on a continuing basis or at periodic intervals (not to exceed six months in the case of employees paid hourly wage rates);

(c) The prevailing wages paid workers not disabled for the job performed who are employed in industry in the vicinity for essentially the same type of work using similar methods and equipment as that used by each worker with disabilities employed under a special minimum wage certificate (see also § 525.10(b) and (d));

(d) The production standards and supporting documentation for non-disabled workers for each job being performed by workers with disabilities employed under special certificates; and

(e) The records required under all of the applicable provisions of part 516 of this title, except that any provision pertaining to homeworker handbooks shall not be applicable to workers with disabilities who are employed by a recognized nonprofit rehabilitation facility and working in or about a home, apartment, tenement, or room in a residential establishment. (See § 525.15) Records required by this section shall be maintained and preserved for the periods specified in part 516 of this title.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1215-0017)

§ 525.17 Revocation of certificates.

(a) A special minimum wage certificate may be revoked for cause at any time. A certificate may be revoked:

(1) As of the date of issuance, if it is found that misrepresentations or false statements have been made in obtaining the certificate or in permitting a

worker with a disability to be employed thereunder;

(2) As of the date of violation, if it is found that any of the provisions of FLSA or of the terms of the certificate have been violated; or

(3) As of the date of notice of revocation, if it is found that the certificate is no longer necessary in order to prevent curtailment of opportunities for employment, or that the requirements of these regulations other than those referred to in paragraph (a)(2) of this section have not been complied with.

(b) Except in cases of willfulness or those in which the public interest requires otherwise, before any certificate shall be revoked, facts or conduct which may warrant such action shall be called to the attention of the employer in writing and such employer shall be afforded an opportunity to demonstrate or achieve compliance with all legal requirements.

§ 525.18 Review.

Any person aggrieved by any action of the Administrator taken pursuant to this part may, within 60 days or such additional time as the Administrator may allow, file with the Administrator a petition for review. Such review, if granted, shall be made by the Administrator. Other interested persons, to the extent it is deemed appropriate, may be afforded an opportunity to present data and views.

§ 525.19 Investigations and hearings.

The Administrator may conduct an investigation, which may include a hearing, prior to taking any action pursuant to these regulations. To the extent it is deemed appropriate, the Administrator may provide an opportunity to other interested persons to present data and views. Proceedings initiated pursuant to this section are separate from those taken pursuant to FLSA section 14(c)(5) and § 525.22.

§ 525.20 Relation to other laws.

No provision of these regulations, or of any special minimum wage certificate issued thereunder, shall excuse noncompliance with any other Federal or State law or municipal ordinance establishing higher standards.

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§ 525.21 Lowering of wage rates.

(a) No employer may reduce the minimum hourly wage rate, guaranteed by a special minimum wage certificate in effect on June 1, 1986, of any worker with disabilities from June 1, 1986 until May 31, 1988, without prior authorization of the Secretary.

(b) This provision applies to those workers with disabilities who were:

(1) Employed during the pay period which included June 1, 1986, even if no work was performed during that pay period; and

(2) Employed under a group or individual special minimum wage certificate which specified a minimum guaranteed rate, i.e., a special certificate issued under former section 14(c) (1) or (2)(b) of FLSA.

(c) In order to obtain authority to lower the wage rate of a worker with a disability to whom this provision applies to a rate below the certificate rate, the employer must submit information as prescribed under this section to the appropriate Regional Office. The burden of establishing the necessity of lowering the wage of a worker with a disability rests with the employer.

(d) In reviewing a request to lower a wage rate of a worker with a disability, documented evidence of the following will be considered:

(1) Any change in the worker's disabling condition which has a substantially negative impact on productive capacity;

(2) Any change in the type of work being performed in the facility which would affect the productivity of the worker with a disability or which would result in the application of a lower prevailing wage rate;

(3) Any change in general economic conditions in the locality in which the work is performed which results in lower prevailing wage rates.

(e) A wage rate may not be lowered until authorization is obtained.

§ 525.22 Employee's right to petition.

(a) Any employee receiving a special minimum wage at a rate specified pursuant to subsection 14(c) of FLSA or the parent or guardian of such an employee may petition the Secretary to obtain a review of such special minimum wage rate. No particular form of

petition is required, except that a petition must be signed by the individual, or the parent or guardian of the individual, and should contain the name and address of the employee and the name and address of the employee's employer. A petition may be filed in person or by mail with the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Employment Standards Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Room S3502, 200 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20210. The petitioner may be represented by counsel in any stage of such proceedings. Upon receipt, the petition shall be forwarded immediately to the Chief Administrative Law Judge.

(b) Upon receipt of a petition, the Chief Administrative Law Judge shall, within 10 days of the receipt of the petition by the Secretary, appoint an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to hear the case. Upon receipt, the ALJ shall notify the employer named in the petition. The ALJ shall also notify the employee, the employer, the Administrator, and the Associate Solicitor for Fair Labor Standards of the time and place of the hearing. The date of the hearing shall be not more than 30 days after the assignment of the case to the ALJ. All the parties shall be given at least eight days' notice of such hearing. Because of the time constraints imposed by the statute, requests for postponement shall be granted only sparingly and for compelling reasons.

(c) Hearings held under this subpart shall be conducted, consistent with statutory time limitations, under the Department's rules of practice and procedure for administrative hearings found in 29 CFR part 18. There shall be a minimum of formality in the proceeding consistent with orderly procedure. Any employer who intends to participate in the proceeding shall provide to the ALJ, and shall serve on the petitioner and the Associate Solicitor for Fair Labor Standards no later than 15 days prior to the commencement of the hearing, or as soon as practical depending on when the notice of a hearing as required under paragraph (b) of this section was received, that documentary evidence pertaining to the employee or employees identified in the petition which is contained in the

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records required by § 525.16 (a), (b), (c) and (d). The Administrator shall be permitted to participate by counsel in the proceeding upon application.

(d) In determining whether any special minimum wage rate is justified, the ALJ shall consider, to the extent evidence is available, the productivity of the employee or employees identified in the petition and the conditions under which such productivity was measured, and the productivity of other employees performing work of essentially the same type and quality for other employers in the same vicinity and the conditions under which much productivity was measured. In these proceedings, the burden of proof on all matters relating to the propriety of a wage at issue shall rest with the employer.

(e) The ALJ shall issue a decision within 30 days after the termination of the hearing and shall serve the decision on the Administrator and all interested parties by Express Mail or other similar system guaranteeing one-day delivery. The decision shall contain appropriate findings and conclusions and an order. If the ALJ finds that the special minimum wage being paid or which has been paid is not justified, the order shall specify the lawful rate and the period of employment to which the rate is applicable. In the absence of evidence sufficient to support the conclusion that the proper wage should be less than the minimum wage, the ALJ shall order that the minimum wage be paid.

(f) Within 15 days after the date of the decision of the ALJ, the petitioner, the Administrator, or the employer who seeks review thereof may request review by the Secretary. No particular form of request is required, except that a request must be in writing and must attach a copy of the ALJ's decision. Requests for review shall be filed with the Secretary of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave. NW., Washington, DC 20210. Any other interested party may file a reply thereto with the Secretary and the Administrator within 5 working days of receipt of such request for review. The request for review and reply thereto shall be transmitted by the Administrator to all interested parties by

Express Mail or other similar system guaranteeing one-day delivery.

(g) The decision of the ALJ shall be deemed to be final agency action 30 days after issuance thereof, unless within 30 days of the date of the decision the Secretary grants a request to review the decision. Where such request for review is granted, within 30 days after receipt of such request the Secretary shall review the record and shall either adopt the decision of the ALJ or issue exceptions. The decision of the ALJ, together with any exceptions issued by the Secretary, shall be deemed to be a final agency action.

(h) Within 30 days of issuance of the final action of the Secretary reviewing the decision of the ALJ or declining to grant such review, any person adversely affected or aggrieved by such action may seek judicial review pursuant to chapter 7 of title 5, United States Code. The record of the case, including the record of proceedings before the ALJ, shall be transmitted by the Secretary to the appropriate court pursuant to the rules of such court.

§ 525.23 Work activities centers.

Nothing in these regulations shall be interpreted to prevent an employer from maintaining or establishing work activities centers to provide therapeutic activities for workers with disabilities as long as the employer complies with the requirement of these regulations. Work activities centers shall include centers planned and designed to provide therapeutic activities for workers with severe disabilities affecting their productive capacity. Any establishment whose workers with disabilities are employed at special minimum wages must comply with the requirements of this part, regardless of the designation of such establishment.

§ 525.24 Advisory Committee on Special Minimum Wages.

The Advisory Committee on Special Minimum Wages, the members of which are appointed by the Secretary, shall advise and make recommendations to the Administrator concerning the administration and enforcement of these regulations and the need for amendments thereof and shall serve

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such other functions as may be desired
by the Administrator.