

§4.119

with applicable regulations governing such rates. See §4.123(d). However, only contracts principally for the carriage of "freight or personnel" are exempt. Thus, the exemption cannot apply where the principal purpose of the contract is packing, crating, handling, loading, and/or storage of goods prior to or following line-haul transportation. The fact that substantial local drayage to and from the contractor's establishment (such as a warehouse) may be required in such contracts does not alter the fact that their principal purpose is other than the carriage of freight. Also, this exemption does not exclude any contracts for the transportation of mail from the application of the Act, because the term *freight* does not include the mail. (For an administrative exemption of certain contracts with common carriers for carriage of mail, see §4.123(d).)

§4.119 Contracts for services of communications companies.

The Act, in paragraph (4) of section 7, exempts from its provisions "any contract for the furnishing of services by radio, telephone, telegraph, or cable companies, subject to the Communications Act of 1934." This exemption is applicable to contracts with such companies for communication services regulated under the Communications Act. It does not exempt from the Act any contracts with such companies to furnish any other kinds of services through the use of service employees.

§4.120 Contracts for public utility services.

The Act, in paragraph (5) of section 7, exempts from its provisions "any contract for public utility services, including electric light and power, water, steam, and gas." This exemption is applicable to contracts for such services with companies whose rates therefor are regulated under State, local, or Federal law governing operations of public utility enterprises. Contracts entered into with public utility companies to furnish services through the use of service employees, other than those subject to such rate regulation, are not exempt from the Act. Among the contracts included in the exemption would be those between Federal electric

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power marketing agencies and investor-owned electric utilities, Rural Electrification Administration cooperatives, municipalities and State agencies engaged in the transmission and sale of electric power and energy.

(See H. Rept. No. 948, 89th Cong., 1st sess., p. 4)

§4.121 Contracts for individual services.

The Act, in paragraph (6) of section 7, exempts from its provisions "any employment contract providing for direct services to a Federal agency by an individual or individuals." This exemption, which applies only to an "employment contract" for "direct services," makes it clear that the Act's application to Federal contracts for services is intended to be limited to service contracts entered into with independent contractors. If a contract to furnish services (to be performed by a service employee as defined in the Act) provides that they will be furnished directly to the Federal agency by the individual under conditions or circumstances which will make him an employee of the agency in providing the contract service, the exemption applies and the contract will not be subject to the Act's provisions. The exemption does not exclude from the Act any contract for services of the kind performed by service employees which is entered into with an independent contractor whose individual services will be used in performing the contract, but as noted earlier in §4.113, such a contract would be outside the general coverage of the Act if only the contractor's individual services would be furnished and no service employee would in any event be used in its performance.

§4.122 Contracts for operation of postal contract stations.

The Act, in paragraph (7) of section 7, exempts from its provisions "any contract with the Post Office Department, [now the U.S. Postal Service], the principal purpose of which is the operation of postal contract stations." The exemption is limited to postal service contracts having the operation of such stations as their principal purpose. A provision of the legislation which

would also have exempted contracts with the U.S. Postal Service having as their principal purpose the transportation, handling, or delivery of the mails was eliminated from the bill during its consideration by the House Committee on Education and Labor (H. Rept. 948, 89th Cong., 1st sess., p. 1).

§ 4.123 Administrative limitations, variances, tolerances, and exemptions.

(a) *Authority of the Secretary.* Section 4(b) of the Act as amended in 1972 authorizes the Secretary to "provide such reasonable limitations" and to "make such rules and regulations allowing reasonable variations, tolerances, and exemptions to and from any or all provisions of this Act (other than §10), but only in special circumstances where he determines that such limitation, variation, tolerance, or exemption is necessary and proper in the public interest or to avoid the serious impairment of Government business, and is in accord with the remedial purpose of this Act to protect prevailing labor standards." This authority is similar to that vested in the Secretary under section 6 of the Walsh-Healey Public Contracts Act (41 U.S.C. 40) and under section 105 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 331).

(b) *Administrative action under section 4(b) of the Act.* The authority conferred on the Secretary by section 4(b) of the Act will be exercised with due regard to the remedial purpose of the statute to protect prevailing labor standards and to avoid the undercutting of such standards which could result from the award of Government work to contractors who will not observe such standards, and whose saving in labor cost therefrom enables them to offer a lower price to the Government than can be offered by the fair employers who maintain the prevailing standards. Administrative action consistent with this statutory purpose may be taken under section 4(b) with or without a request therefor, when found necessary and proper in accordance with the statutory standards. No formal procedures have been prescribed for requesting such action. However, a request for exemption from the Act's provisions will be granted only upon a strong and af-

firmative showing that it is necessary and proper in the public interest or to avoid serious impairment of Government business, and is in accord with the remedial purpose of the Act to protect prevailing labor standards. If the request for administrative action under section 4(b) is not made by the headquarters office of the contracting agency to which the contract services are to be provided, the views of such office on the matter should be obtained and submitted with the request or the contracting officer may forward such a request through channels to the agency headquarters for submission with the latter's views to the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, whenever any wage payment issues are involved. Any request relating to an occupational safety or health issue shall be submitted to the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health, Department of Labor.

(c) *Documentation of official action under section 4(b).* All papers and documents made a part of the official record of administrative action pursuant to section 4(b) of the Act are available for public inspection in accordance with the regulations in 29 CFR part 70. Limitations, variations, tolerances and exemptions of general applicability and legal effect promulgated pursuant to such authority are published in the FEDERAL REGISTER and made a part of the rules incorporated in this part 4. For convenience in use of the rules, they are generally set forth in the sections of this part covering the subject matter to which they relate. (See, for example, §§4.5(b), 4.6(o), 4.112 and 4.113.) Any rules that are promulgated under section 4(b) of the Act relating to subject matter not dealt with elsewhere in this part 4 will be set forth immediately following this paragraph.

(d) In addition to the statutory exemptions in section 7 of the Act (see §4.115(b)), the following types of contracts have been exempted from all the provisions of the Service Contract Act of 1965, pursuant to section 4(b) of the Act, prior to its amendment by Public Law 92-473, which exemptions the Secretary of Labor found to be necessary and proper in the public interest or to