

§ 541.601

29 CFR Ch. V (7-1-10 Edition)

least equal to the entrance salary for teachers in the educational establishment by which the employee is employed, as provided in § 541.204(a)(1).

(d) In the case of computer employees, the compensation requirement also may be met by compensation on an hourly basis at a rate not less than \$27.63 an hour, as provided in § 541.400(b).

(e) In the case of professional employees, the compensation requirements in this section shall not apply to employees engaged as teachers (*see* § 541.303); employees who hold a valid license or certificate permitting the practice of law or medicine or any of their branches and are actually engaged in the practice thereof (*see* § 541.304); or to employees who hold the requisite academic degree for the general practice of medicine and are engaged in an internship or resident program pursuant to the practice of the profession (*see* § 541.304). In the case of medical occupations, the exception from the salary or fee requirement does not apply to pharmacists, nurses, therapists, technologists, sanitarians, dietitians, social workers, psychologists, psychometrists, or other professions which service the medical profession.

§ 541.601 Highly compensated employees.

(a) An employee with total annual compensation of at least \$100,000 is deemed exempt under section 13(a)(1) of the Act if the employee customarily and regularly performs any one or more of the exempt duties or responsibilities of an executive, administrative or professional employee identified in subparts B, C or D of this part.

(b)(1) "Total annual compensation" must include at least \$455 per week paid on a salary or fee basis. Total annual compensation may also include commissions, nondiscretionary bonuses and other nondiscretionary compensation earned during a 52-week period. Total annual compensation does not include board, lodging and other facilities as defined in § 541.606, and does not include payments for medical insurance, payments for life insurance, contributions to retirement plans and the cost of other fringe benefits.

(2) If an employee's total annual compensation does not total at least the minimum amount established in paragraph (a) of this section by the last pay period of the 52-week period, the employer may, during the last pay period or within one month after the end of the 52-week period, make one final payment sufficient to achieve the required level. For example, an employee may earn \$80,000 in base salary, and the employer may anticipate based upon past sales that the employee also will earn \$20,000 in commissions. However, due to poor sales in the final quarter of the year, the employee actually only earns \$10,000 in commissions. In this situation, the employer may within one month after the end of the year make a payment of at least \$10,000 to the employee. Any such final payment made after the end of the 52-week period may count only toward the prior year's total annual compensation and not toward the total annual compensation in the year it was paid. If the employer fails to make such a payment, the employee does not qualify as a highly compensated employee, but may still qualify as exempt under subparts B, C or D of this part.

(3) An employee who does not work a full year for the employer, either because the employee is newly hired after the beginning of the year or ends the employment before the end of the year, may qualify for exemption under this section if the employee receives a *pro rata* portion of the minimum amount established in paragraph (a) of this section, based upon the number of weeks that the employee will be or has been employed. An employer may make one final payment as under paragraph (b)(2) of this section within one month after the end of employment.

(4) The employer may utilize any 52-week period as the year, such as a calendar year, a fiscal year, or an anniversary of hire year. If the employer does not identify some other year period in advance, the calendar year will apply.

(c) A high level of compensation is a strong indicator of an employee's exempt status, thus eliminating the need for a detailed analysis of the employee's job duties. Thus, a highly compensated employee will qualify for exemption if the employee customarily

and regularly performs any one or more of the exempt duties or responsibilities of an executive, administrative or professional employee identified in subparts B, C or D of this part. An employee may qualify as a highly compensated executive employee, for example, if the employee customarily and regularly directs the work of two or more other employees, even though the employee does not meet all of the other requirements for the executive exemption under § 541.100.

(d) This section applies only to employees whose primary duty includes performing office or non-manual work. Thus, for example, non-management production-line workers and non-management employees in maintenance, construction and similar occupations such as carpenters, electricians, mechanics, plumbers, iron workers, craftsmen, operating engineers, longshoremen, construction workers, laborers and other employees who perform work involving repetitive operations with their hands, physical skill and energy are not exempt under this section no matter how highly paid they might be.

§ 541.602 Salary basis.

(a) *General rule.* An employee will be considered to be paid on a "salary basis" within the meaning of these regulations if the employee regularly receives each pay period on a weekly, or less frequent basis, a predetermined amount constituting all or part of the employee's compensation, which amount is not subject to reduction because of variations in the quality or quantity of the work performed. Subject to the exceptions provided in paragraph (b) of this section, an exempt employee must receive the full salary for any week in which the employee performs any work without regard to the number of days or hours worked. Exempt employees need not be paid for any workweek in which they perform no work. An employee is not paid on a salary basis if deductions from the employee's predetermined compensation are made for absences occasioned by the employer or by the operating requirements of the business. If the employee is ready, willing and able to

work, deductions may not be made for time when work is not available.

(b) *Exceptions.* The prohibition against deductions from pay in the salary basis requirement is subject to the following exceptions:

(1) Deductions from pay may be made when an exempt employee is absent from work for one or more full days for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability. Thus, if an employee is absent for two full days to handle personal affairs, the employee's salaried status will not be affected if deductions are made from the salary for two full-day absences. However, if an exempt employee is absent for one and a half days for personal reasons, the employer can deduct only for the one full-day absence.

(2) Deductions from pay may be made for absences of one or more full days occasioned by sickness or disability (including work-related accidents) if the deduction is made in accordance with a bona fide plan, policy or practice of providing compensation for loss of salary occasioned by such sickness or disability. The employer is not required to pay any portion of the employee's salary for full-day absences for which the employee receives compensation under the plan, policy or practice. Deductions for such full-day absences also may be made before the employee has qualified under the plan, policy or practice, and after the employee has exhausted the leave allowance thereunder. Thus, for example, if an employer maintains a short-term disability insurance plan providing salary replacement for 12 weeks starting on the fourth day of absence, the employer may make deductions from pay for the three days of absence before the employee qualifies for benefits under the plan; for the twelve weeks in which the employee receives salary replacement benefits under the plan; and for absences after the employee has exhausted the 12 weeks of salary replacement benefits. Similarly, an employer may make deductions from pay for absences of one or more full days if salary replacement benefits are provided under a State disability insurance law or under a State workers' compensation law.