

## Wage and Hour Division, Labor

## § 778.320

purportedly for overtime hours is not in fact an overtime payment.

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### § 778.318 Productive and nonproductive hours of work.

(a) *Failure to pay for nonproductive time worked.* Some agreements provide for payment only for the hours spent in productive work; the work hours spent in waiting time, time spent in travel on the employer's behalf or similar nonproductive time are not made compensable and in some cases are neither counted nor compensated. Payment pursuant to such an agreement will not comply with the Act; such nonproductive working hours must be counted and paid for.

(b) *Compensation payable for nonproductive hours worked.* The parties may agree to compensate nonproductive hours worked at a rate (at least the minimum) which is lower than the rate applicable to productive work. In such a case, the regular rate is the weighted average of the two rates, as discussed in § 778.115 and the employee whose maximum hours standard is 40 hours is owed compensation at his regular rate for all of the first 40 hours and at a rate not less than one and one-half times this rate for all hours in excess of 40. (See § 778.415 for the alternative method of computing overtime pay on the applicable rate.) In the absence of any agreement setting a different rate for nonproductive hours, the employee would be owed compensation at the regular hourly rate set for productive work for all hours up to 40 and at a rate at least one and one-half times that rate for hours in excess of 40.

(c) *Compensation attributable to both productive and nonproductive hours.* The situation described in paragraph (a) of this section is to be distinguished from one in which such nonproductive hours are properly counted as working time but no special hourly rate is assigned to such hours because it is understood by the parties that the other compensation received by the employee is intended to cover pay for such hours. For example, while it is not proper for an employer to agree with his pieceworkers that the hours spent in downtime (waiting for work) will not be paid

for or will be neither paid for nor counted, it is permissible for the parties to agree that the pay the employees will earn at piece rates is intended to compensate them for all hours worked, the productive as well as the nonproductive hours. If this is the agreement of the parties, the regular rate of the pieceworker will be the rate determined by dividing the total piecework earnings by the total hours worked (both productive and nonproductive) in the workweek. Extra compensation (one-half the rate as so determined) would, of course, be due for each hour worked in excess of the applicable maximum hours standard.

### EFFECT OF PAYING FOR BUT NOT COUNTING CERTAIN HOURS

### § 778.319 Paying for but not counting hours worked.

In some contracts provision is made for payment for certain hours, which constitute working time under the Act, coupled with a provision that these hours will not be counted as working time. Such a provision is a nullity. If the hours in question are hours worked, they must be counted as such in determining whether more than the applicable maximum hours have been worked in the workweek. If more hours have been worked, the employee must be paid overtime compensation at not less than one and one-half times his regular rate for all overtime hours. A provision that certain hours will be compensated only at straight time rates is likewise invalid. If the hours are actually hours worked in excess of the applicable maximum hours standard, extra half-time compensation will be due regardless of any agreement to the contrary.

### § 778.320 Hours that would not be hours worked if not paid for.

In some cases an agreement provides for compensation for hours spent in certain types of activities which would not be regarded as working time under the Act if no compensation were provided. Preliminary and postliminary activities and time spent in eating meals between working hours fall in this category. The agreement of the parties to provide compensation for