

§779.216

individual on the other hand, the requirement of performance “through common control” of “related activities” for a “common business purpose” may not be sufficiently met.

§779.216 Statutory construction of the terms.

The terms “unified operation” and “common control” do not have a fixed legal or technical meaning. As used in the definition, these and other terms must be given an interpretation consistent with the Congressional intention to be ascertained from the context in which they are used, the legislation of which they form a part, and the legislative history. In extending coverage of the Act on an “enterprise” basis, the Congress intended, by the 1961 and 1966 amendments to cover, among others, business organizations and chain store systems which may perform their related activities through complex business arrangements or business structures, whether they perform their activities for a common business purpose through unified operation or through the retention or exercise of control. For these reasons, the definition of the term “enterprise” is stated in broad general terms. This legislative intent is evidenced both by the statements in the Committee Reports and by the definition itself, particularly the broad references to the inclusion in the “enterprise” of “all such activities” whether performed “in one or more establishments” or “by one or more corporate or other organizational units.” When the Act was amended in 1966 the Congress further broadened coverage by redefining an enterprise engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce in section 3(s). (See §779.22.) Where the Congress intended to exclude certain arrangements or activities from the “enterprise” it did so by specific provision under the prior and amended Act.

§779.217 “Unified operation” defined.

Webster defines the word “unify” to mean “to cause to be one; to make into a unit; to unite.” The pertinent definition of “operation” is a method or way of operating, working or functioning. Since the term “unified operation” has reference to the method of performing

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the related activities, it means combining, uniting, or organizing their performance so that they are in effect a single business unit or an organized business system which is an economic unit directed to the accomplishment of a common business purpose. The term “unified operation” thus includes a business which may consist of separate segments but which is conducted or operated as a unit or as a single business for a common business purpose.

§779.218 Methods to accomplish “unified operation.”

There are many instances where several establishments, persons, corporations, or other business organizations, join together to perform some or all of their activities as a unified business or business system. They may accomplish such unification through agreements, franchises, grants, leases, or other arrangements which have the effect of aligning or integrating the activities of one company with the activities of others so that they constitute a single business or unified business system. Whether in any particular case the activities are performed through “unified operation” and have the effect of creating a single enterprise, will depend upon all the facts, including the manner in which the activities are performed, the agreements and arrangements which govern their performance, and the other relationships between the parties, considered in the light of the statutory provision and the legislative intent. (cf *Wirtz v. Wornom's Pharmacy* (E.D. Va.), 18 WH Cases 289, 365; 57 Labor Cases 32,006, 32,030.)

§779.219 Unified operation may be achieved without common control or common ownership.

The performance of related activities through “unified operation” to serve a common business purpose may be achieved without common control and without common ownership. In particular cases ownership or control of the related activities may be factors to be considered, along with all facts and circumstances, in determining whether the activities are performed through “unified operation.” It is clear from the definition that if the described activities are performed through unified

operation they will be part of the enterprise whether they are performed by one company or by more than one corporate or other organizational unit. The term "unified operation" has reference particularly to enterprises composed of a number of separate companies as is clear in the quotation from the Senate Report in § 779.215. Where the related activities are performed by a single company, or under other single ownership, they will ordinarily be performed through "common control," and the question of whether they are also performed through unified operation will not need to be decided. (*Wirtz v. Barnes Grocer Co.*, 398 F. 2d 718 (C.A. 8).)

§ 779.220 Unified operation may exist as to separately owned or controlled activities which are related.

Whether there is unified operation of related activities will thus be of concern primarily in those cases where the related activities are separately owned or controlled but where, through arrangement, agreement or otherwise, they are so performed as to constitute a unified business system organized for a common business purpose. For example, a group of separately incorporated, separately owned companies, may agree to conduct their activities in such manner as to be for all intents and purposes a single business system except for the fact that the ownership and control of the individual segments of the business are retained, in part or in whole, by the individual companies comprising the unified business system. The various units may operate under a single trade name; construct their establishment to appear identical; use identical equipment; sell generally the same goods or provide the same type of services, and, in some cases, at uniform standardized prices; and in other respects appear to the persons utilizing their services or purchasing their goods as being the same business. They also may arrange for group purchasing and warehousing; for advertising as a single business; and for standardization of their records, as well as their credit, employment, and other business policies and practices. In such circumstances the activities may well be performed through "uni-

fied operation" sufficient to consider all of the related activities performed by the group of units as constituting one enterprise, despite the separate ownership of the various segments and despite the fact that the individual units or segments may retain control as to some or all of their own activities. That this is in accord with the congressional intent is plain, since where the Congress intended that such arrangements shall not bring a group of certain individual retail or service establishments into a single enterprise, provision to accomplish such exception was specifically included. (See § 779.226, discussing the proviso in section 3(r) with respect to certain franchise and other specified arrangements entered into between independently owned retail or service establishments and other businesses.)

§ 779.221 "Common control" defined.

Under the definition the "enterprise" includes all related activities performed through "common control" for a common business purpose. The word "control" may be defined as the act of fact of controlling; power or authority to control; directing or restraining domination. "Control" thus includes the power or authority to control. In relation to the performance of the described activities, the "control," referred to in the definition in section 3(r) includes the power to direct, restrict, regulate, govern, or administer the performance of the activities. "Common" control includes the sharing of control and it is not limited to sole control or complete control by one person or corporation. "Common" control therefore exists where the performance of the described activities are controlled by one person or by a number of persons, corporations, or other organizational units acting together. This is clearly supported by the definition which specifically includes in the "enterprise" all such activities whether performed by "one or more corporate or other organizational units." The meaning of "common control" is discussed comprehensively in part 776 of this chapter.