§ 785.18 Rest.

Rest periods of short duration, running from 5 minutes to about 20 minutes, are common in industry. They promote the efficiency of the employee and are customarily paid for as working time. They must be counted as hours worked. Compensable time of rest periods may not be offset against other working time such as compensable waiting time or on-call time. (Mitchell v. Greinetz, 235 F. 2d 621, 13 W.H. Cases 3 (C.A. 10, 1956); Ballard v. Consolidated Steel Corp., Ltd., 61 F. Supp. 996 (S.D. Cal. 1945))

§ 785.19 Meal.

(a) Bona fide meal periods. Bona fide meal periods are not worktime. Bona fide meal periods do not include coffee breaks or time for snacks. These are rest periods. The employee must be completely relieved from duty for the purposes of eating regular meals. Ordinarily 30 minutes or more is long enough for a bona fide meal period. A shorter period may be long enough under special conditions. The employee is not relieved if he is required to perform any duties, whether active or inactive, while eating. For example, an office employee who is required to eat at his desk or a factory worker who is required to be at his machine is working while eating. (Culkin v. Glenn L. Martin, Nebraska Co., 97 F. Supp. 661 (D. Neb. 1951), aff’d 197 F. 2d 981 (C.A. 8, 1952), cert. denied 344 U.S. 888 (1952); Thompson v. Stock & Sons, Inc., 93 F. Supp. 213 (E.D. Mich 1950), aff’d 194 F. 2d 493 (C.A. 6, 1952); Biggs v. Joshua Hendy Corp., 183 F. 2d 515 (C. A. 9, 1950), 187 F. 2d 447 (C.A. 9, 1951); Walling v. Dunbar Transfer & Storage Co., 3 W.H. Cases 284; 6 Labor Cases para. 61.226 (W.D. Okla. 1942).)

(b) Where no permission to leave premises. It is not necessary that an employee be permitted to leave the premises if he is otherwise completely freed from duties during the meal period.

§ 785.20 General.

Under certain conditions an employee is considered to be working even though some of his time is spent in sleeping or in certain other activities.

§ 785.21 Less than 24-hour duty.

An employee who is required to be on duty for less than 24 hours is working even though he is permitted to sleep or engage in other personal activities when not busy. A telephone operator, for example, who is required to be on duty for specified hours is working even though she is permitted to sleep when not busy answering calls. It makes no difference that she is furnished facilities for sleeping. Her time is given to her employer. She is required to be on duty and the time is worktime. (Central Mo. Telephone Co. v. Conwell, 170 F. 2d 641 (C.A. 8, 1948); Strand v. Garden Valley Telephone Co., 51 F. Supp. 898 (D. Minn. 1943); Whitsett v. Enid Ice & Fuel Co., 2 W. H. Cases 584; 6 Labor Cases para. 61.226 (W.D. Okla. 1942).)

§ 785.22 Duty of 24 hours or more.

(a) General. Where an employee is required to be on duty for 24 hours or more, the employer and the employee may agree to exclude bona fide meal periods and a bona fide regularly scheduled sleeping period of not more than 8 hours from hours worked. (Armour v. Wantock, 323 U.S. 126 (1944); Skidmore v. Swift, 323 U.S. 134 (1944); General Electric Co. v. Porter, 208 F. 2d 805 (C.A. 9, 1953), cert. denied, 347 U.S. 951, 975 (1954); Bowers v. Remington Rand, 64 F. Supp. 629 (S.D. Ill. 1946), aff’d 159 F. 2d 114 (C.A. 7, 1946) cert. denied 330 U.S. 843 (1947); Bell v. Porter, 159 F. 2d 117
§ 785.23 Employees residing on employer’s premises or working at home.

An employee who resides on his employer’s premises on a permanent basis or for extended periods of time is not considered as working all the time he is on the premises. Ordinarily, he may engage in normal private pursuits and thus have enough time for eating, sleeping, entertaining, and other periods of complete freedom from all duties when he may leave the premises for purposes of his own. It is, of course, difficult to determine the exact hours worked under these circumstances and any reasonable agreement of the parties which takes into consideration all of the pertinent facts will be accepted. This rule would apply, for example, to the pumper of a stripper well who resides on the premises of his employer and also to a telephone operator who has the switchboard in her own home.

§ 785.24 Principles noted in Portal-to-Portal Bulletin.

In November, 1947, the Administrator issued the Portal-to-Portal Bulletin (part 790 of this chapter). In dealing with this subject, §790.8 (b) and (c) of this chapter said:

(b) The term “principal activities” includes all activities which are an integral part of a principal activity. Two examples of what is meant by an integral part of a principal activity are found in the report of the Judiciary Committee of the Senate on the Portal-to-Portal bill. They are the following:

(1) In connection with the operation of a lathe, an employee will frequently, at the commencement of his workday, oil, grease, or clean his machine, or install a new cutting tool. Such activities are an integral part of the principal activity, and are included within such term.

(2) In the case of a garment worker in a textile mill, who is required to report 30 minutes before other employees report to commence their principal activities, and who during such 30 minutes distributes clothing or parts of clothing at the workbenches of other employees and gets machines in readiness for operation by other employees, such activities are among the principal activities of such employee.

Such preparatory activities, which the Administrator has always regarded as work and as compensable under the Fair Labor Standards Act, remain so under the Portal Act, regardless of contrary custom or contract.

§ 785.25 Illustrative U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

These principles have guided the Administrator in the enforcement of the Act. Two cases decided by the U.S. Supreme Court further illustrate the types of activities which are considered an integral part of the employees’ jobs. In one, employees changed their clothes and took showers in a battery plant where the manufacturing process