Wage and Hour Division, Labor

§ 779.231 Franchise and other arrangements.

(a) There are many different and complex arrangements by which businesses may join to perform their activities for a common purpose. A general discussion will be found in part 776 of this chapter. The quotation in §779.229 from the Senate Report shows that Congress recognized that some franchise, lease, or other arrangements have the effect of creating a larger enterprise and whether they do or not depends on the facts. The facts may show that the arrangements are so restrictive as to deprive the individual establishment of the essential prerogatives which are the attributes of an independent business. (Compare Wirtz v. Lunsford, 404 F. 2d, 693 (C.A. 6).) An establishment through such arrangements may transfer sufficient control so that it becomes in effect a unit in a unified chain operation. In such cases the result of the arrangement will be to create a larger enterprise composed of the various segments, including the establishment which relinquishes its control.

(b) The term “franchise” is not susceptible of precise definition. The extent to which a businessman relinquishes the control of his business or the extent to which a franchise results in the performance of the activities through unified operation or common control depends upon the terms of the contract and the other relationships between the parties. Ultimately the determination of the precise scope of such arrangements which result in creating larger enterprises rests with the courts.

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§ 779.231 Franchise arrangements which do not create a larger enterprise.

(a) While it is clear that in every franchise a businessman surrenders some rights, it equally is clear that every franchise does not create a larger enterprise.
§ 779.232 Franchise or other arrangements which create a larger enterprise.

(a) In other instances, franchise arrangements do result in bringing a dealer’s business into a larger enterprise with the one granting the franchise. Where the franchise arrangement results in vesting control over the operations of the dealer’s business in the one granting the franchise, the result is to place the dealer in a larger enterprise with the one granting the franchise. Where there are multiple units to which such franchises have been granted, the several dealers are considered to be subject to the common control of the one granting the franchise and all would be included in the same larger enterprise.

(b) It is not possible to lay down specific rules to determine whether a franchise or other agreement is such that a single enterprise results because all the facts and circumstances must be examined in the light of the definition of the term “enterprise” as discussed above in this subpart. However, the following example illustrates a franchising company and independently owned retail establishments which would constitute a single enterprise:

(1) The franchisor had developed a system of retail food store operations, built up a large volume of buying power, formulated rules and regulations for the successful operation of stores together constituting a system which for many years proved in practice to be of commercial value to the separate stores; and

(2) The franchisor desired to extend its business through the operation of associated franchise stores, by responsible persons in various localities to act as limited agents, and to be parts