

Federal contracts for services is intended to be limited to service contracts entered into with independent contractors. If a contract to furnish services (to be performed by a service employee as defined in the Act) provides that they will be furnished directly to the Federal agency by the individual under conditions or circumstances which will make him an employee of the agency in providing the contract service, the exemption applies and the contract will not be subject to the Act's provisions. The exemption does not exclude from the Act any contract for services of the kind performed by service employees which is entered into with an independent contractor whose individual services will be used in performing the contract, but as noted earlier in § 4.113, such a contract would be outside the general coverage of the Act if only the contractor's individual services would be furnished and no service employee would in any event be used in its performance.

§ 4.122 Contracts for operation of postal contract stations.

The Act, in paragraph (7) of section 7, exempts from its provisions "any contract with the Post Office Department, [now the U.S. Postal Service], the principal purpose of which is the operation of postal contract stations." The exemption is limited to postal service contracts having the operation of such stations as their principal purpose. A provision of the legislation which would also have exempted contracts with the U.S. Postal Service having as their principal purpose the transportation, handling, or delivery of the mails was eliminated from the bill during its consideration by the House Committee on Education and Labor (H. Rept. 948, 89th Cong., 1st sess., p. 1).

§ 4.123 Administrative limitations, variances, tolerances, and exemptions.

(a) *Authority of the Secretary.* Section 4(b) of the Act as amended in 1972 authorizes the Secretary to "provide such reasonable limitations" and to "make such rules and regulations allowing reasonable variations, tolerances, and exemptions to and from any or all pro-

visions of this Act (other than § 10), but only in special circumstances where he determines that such limitation, variation, tolerance, or exemption is necessary and proper in the public interest or to avoid the serious impairment of Government business, and is in accord with the remedial purpose of this Act to protect prevailing labor standards." This authority is similar to that vested in the Secretary under section 6 of the Walsh-Healey Public Contracts Act (41 U.S.C. 40) and under section 105 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 331).

(b) *Administrative action under section 4(b) of the Act.* The authority conferred on the Secretary by section 4(b) of the Act will be exercised with due regard to the remedial purpose of the statute to protect prevailing labor standards and to avoid the undercutting of such standards which could result from the award of Government work to contractors who will not observe such standards, and whose saving in labor cost therefrom enables them to offer a lower price to the Government than can be offered by the fair employers who maintain the prevailing standards. Administrative action consistent with this statutory purpose may be taken under section 4(b) with or without a request therefor, when found necessary and proper in accordance with the statutory standards. No formal procedures have been prescribed for requesting such action. However, a request for exemption from the Act's provisions will be granted only upon a strong and affirmative showing that it is necessary and proper in the public interest or to avoid serious impairment of Government business, and is in accord with the remedial purpose of the Act to protect prevailing labor standards. If the request for administrative action under section 4(b) is not made by the headquarters office of the contracting agency to which the contract services are to be provided, the views of such office on the matter should be obtained and submitted with the request or the contracting officer may forward such a request through channels to the agency headquarters for submission with the latter's views to the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, whenever any wage