

# Title 29: Labor

---

## **PART 785—HOURS WORKED**

**(Regulations in effect on October 27, 2023)**

---

### **Contents**

#### **Subpart B—Principles for Determination of Hours Worked**

- §785.5 General requirements of sections 6 and 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- §785.6 Definition of “employ” and partial definition of “hours worked”.
- §785.8 Effect of custom, contract, or agreement.

#### **Subpart C—Application of Principles**

##### **Employees “Suffered or Permitted” to Work**

- §785.11 General.
- §785.12 Work performed away from premises or job site.
- §785.13 Duty of management.

##### **Waiting Time**

- §785.14 General.
- §785.15 On duty.
- §785.16 Off duty.
- §785.17 On-call time.

##### **Rest and Meal Periods**

- §785.18 Rest.
- §785.19 Meal.

##### **Sleeping Time and Certain Other Activities**

- §785.20 General.
- §785.21 Less than 24-hour duty.
- §785.22 Duty of 24 hours or more.
- §785.23 Employees residing on employer’s premises or working at home.

##### **Preparatory and Concluding Activities**

- §785.24 Principles noted in Portal-to-Portal Bulletin.
- §785.25 Illustrative U.S. Supreme Court decisions.
- §785.26 Section 3(o) of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

##### **Lectures, Meetings and Training Programs**

- §785.27 General.
- §785.28 Involuntary attendance.
- §785.29 Training directly related to employee’s job.
- §785.30 Independent training.
- §785.31 Special situations.
- §785.32 Apprenticeship training.

##### **Travel Time**

- §785.33 General.
- §785.34 Effect of section 4 of the Portal-to-Portal Act.
- §785.35 Home to work; ordinary situation.

- §785.36 Home to work in emergency situations.
- §785.37 Home to work on special one-day assignment in another city.
- §785.38 Travel that is all in the day's work.
- §785.40 When private automobile is used in travel away from home community.
- §785.41 Work performed while traveling.

#### **Adjusting Grievances, Medical Attention, Civic and Charitable Work, and Suggestion Systems**

- §785.42 Adjusting grievances.
- §785.43 Medical attention.
- §785.44 Civic and charitable work.
- §785.45 Suggestions systems.

### **Subpart D—Recording Working Time**

- §785.46 Applicable regulations governing keeping of records.
- §785.47 Where records show insubstantial or insignificant periods of time.
- §785.48 Use of time clocks.

---

### **Subpart B—Principles for Determination of Hours Worked**

#### **§785.5 General requirements of section 6 and 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act.**

Section 6 requires the payment of a minimum wage by an employer to his employees who are subject to the Act. Section 7 prohibits their employment for more than a specified number of hours per week without proper overtime compensation.

[26 FR 7732, Aug. 18, 1961]

↑ *Back to the top*

#### **§785.6 Definition of “employ” and partial definition of “hours worked”.**

By statutory definition the term “employ” includes (section 3(g)) “to suffer or permit to work.” The act, however, contains no definition of “work”. Section 3(o) of the Fair Labor Standards Act contains a partial definition of “hours worked” in the form of a limited exception for clothes-changing and wash-up time.

↑ *Back to the top*

#### **§785.8 Effect of custom, contract, or agreement.**

The principles are applicable, even though there may be a custom, contract, or agreement not to pay for the time so spent with special statutory exceptions discussed in [§§ 785.9](#) and [785.26](#).

[35 FR 15289, Oct. 1, 1970]

↑ *Back to the top*

## **Subpart C—Application of Principles**

### Employees “Suffered or Permitted” to Work

#### **§785.11 General.**

Work not requested but suffered or permitted is work time. For example, an employee may voluntarily continue to work at the end of the shift. He may be a pieceworker, he may desire to finish an assigned task or he may wish to correct errors, paste work tickets, prepare time reports or other records. The reason is immaterial. The employer knows or has reason to believe that he is continuing to work and the time is working time. (*Handler v. Thrasher*, 191, F. 2d 120 (C.A. 10, 1951); *Republican Publishing Co. v. American Newspaper Guild*, 172 F. 2d 943 (C.A. 1, 1949); *Kappler v. Republic Pictures Corp.*, 59 F. Supp. 112 (S.D. Iowa 1945), aff'd 151 F. 2d 543 (C.A. 8, 1945); 327 U.S. 757 (1946); *Hogue v. National Automotive Parts Ass'n*. 87 F. Supp. 816 (E.D. Mich. 1949); *Barker v. Georgia Power & Light Co.*, 2 W.H. Cases 486; 5 CCH Labor Cases, para. 61,095 (M.D. Ga. 1942); *Steger v. Beard & Stone Electric Co., Inc.*, 1 W.H. Cases 593; 4 Labor Cases 60,643 (N.D. Texas, 1941))

[↑ Back to the top](#)

#### **§785.12 Work performed away from premises or job site.**

The rule is also applicable to work performed away from the premises or the job site, or even at home. If the employer knows or has reason to believe that the work is being performed, he must count the time as hours worked.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

#### **§785.13 Duty of management.**

In all such cases it is the duty of the management to exercise its control and see that the work is not performed if it does not want it to be performed. It cannot sit back and accept the benefits without compensating for them. The mere promulgation of a rule against such work is not enough. Management has the power to enforce the rule and must make every effort to do so.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

### Waiting Time

#### **§785.14 General.**

Whether waiting time is time worked under the Act depends upon particular circumstances. The determination involves “scrutiny and construction of the agreements between particular parties, appraisal of their practical construction of the working agreement by conduct, consideration of the nature of the service, and its relation to the waiting time, and all of the circumstances. Facts may show that the employee was engaged to wait or they may show that he waited to be engaged.” (*Skidmore v. Swift*, 323 U.S. 134 (1944)) Such questions “must be determined in accordance with common sense and the general concept of work or employment.” (*Central Mo. Tel. Co. v. Conwell*, 170 F. 2d 641 (C.A. 8, 1948))

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## §785.15 On duty.

A stenographer who reads a book while waiting for dictation, a messenger who works a crossword puzzle while awaiting assignments, fireman who plays checkers while waiting for alarms and a factory worker who talks to his fellow employees while waiting for machinery to be repaired are all working during their periods of inactivity. The rule also applies to employees who work away from the plant. For example, a repair man is working while he waits for his employer's customer to get the premises in readiness. The time is worktime even though the employee is allowed to leave the premises or the job site during such periods of inactivity. The periods during which these occur are unpredictable. They are usually of short duration. In either event the employee is unable to use the time effectively for his own purposes. It belongs to and is controlled by the employer. In all of these cases waiting is an integral part of the job. The employee is engaged to wait. (See: *Skidmore v. Swift*, 323 U.S. 134, 137 (1944); *Wright v. Carrigg*, 275 F. 2d 448, 14 W.H. Cases (C.A. 4, 1960); *Mitchell v. Wigger*, 39 Labor Cases, para. 66,278, 14 W.H. Cases 534 (D.N.M. 1960); *Mitchell v. Nicholson*, 179 F. Supp. 292, 14 W.H. Cases 487 (W.D.N.C. 1959))

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## §785.16 Off duty.

(a) **General.** Periods during which an employee is completely relieved from duty and which are long enough to enable him to use the time effectively for his own purposes are not hours worked. He is not completely relieved from duty and cannot use the time effectively for his own purposes unless he is definitely told in advance that he may leave the job and that he will not have to commence work until a definitely specified hour has arrived. Whether the time is long enough to enable him to use the time effectively for his own purposes depends upon all of the facts and circumstances of the case.

(b) **Truck drivers; specific examples.** A truck driver who has to wait at or near the job site for goods to be loaded is working during the loading period. If the driver reaches his destination and while awaiting the return trip is required to take care of his employer's property, he is also working while waiting. In both cases the employee is engaged to wait. Waiting is an integral part of the job. On the other hand, for example, if the truck driver is sent from Washington, DC to New York City, leaving at 6 a.m. and arriving at 12 noon, and is completely and specifically relieved from all duty until 6 p.m. when he again goes on duty for the return trip the idle time is not working time. He is waiting to be engaged. (*Skidmore v. Swift*, 323 U.S. 134, 137 (1944); *Walling v. Dunbar Transfer & Storage*, 3 W.H. Cases 284; 7 Labor Cases para. 61,565 (W.D. Tenn. 1943); *Gifford v. Chapman*, 6 W.H. Cases 806; 12 Labor Cases para. 63,661 (W.D. Okla., 1947); *Thompson v. Daugherty*, 40 Supp. 279 (D. Md. 1941))

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## §785.17 On-call time.

An employee who is required to remain on call on the employer's premises or so close thereto that he cannot use the time effectively for his own purposes is working while "on call". An employee who is not required to remain on the employer's premises but is merely required to leave word at his home or with company officials where he may be reached is not working while on call. (*Armour & Co. v. Wantock*, 323 U.S. 126 (1944); *Handler v. Thrasher*, 191 F. 2d 120 (C.A. 10, 1951); *Walling v. Bank of Waynesboro, Georgia*, 61 F. Supp. 384 (S.D. Ga. 1945))

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## Rest and Meal Periods

### §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))

[↑ Back to the top](#)

### §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; 7 Labor Cases para. 61.565 (W.D. Tenn. 1943); *Lofton v. Seneca Coal and Coke Co.*, 2 W.H. Cases 669; 6 Labor Cases para. 61.271 (N.D. Okla. 1942); aff'd 136 F. 2d 359 (C.A. 10, 1943); cert. denied 320 U.S. 772 (1943); *Mitchell v. Tampa Cigar Co.*, 36 Labor Cases para. 65, 198, 14 W.H. Cases 38 (S.D. Fla. 1959); *Douglass v. Hurwitz Co.*, 145 F. Supp. 29, 13 W.H. Cases (E.D. Pa. 1956))

(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.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## Sleeping Time and Certain Other Activities

### §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.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

### §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); *Whitsitt v. Enid Ice & Fuel Co.*, 2 W. H. Cases 584; 6 Labor Cases para. 61,226 (W.D. Okla. 1942).)

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## §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, provided adequate sleeping facilities are furnished by the employer and the employee can usually enjoy an uninterrupted night's sleep. If sleeping period is of more than 8 hours, only 8 hours will be credited. Where no expressed or implied agreement to the contrary is present, the 8 hours of sleeping time and lunch periods constitute 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. 620 (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 (C.A. 7, 1946) cert. denied 330 U.S. 813 (1947); *Bridgeman v. Ford, Bacon & Davis*, 161 F. 2d 962 (C.A. 8, 1947); *Rokey v. Day & Zimmerman*, 157 F. 2d 736 (C.A. 8, 1946); *McLaughlin v. Todd & Brown, Inc.*, 7 W.H. Cases 1014; 15 Labor Cases para. 64,606 (N.D. Ind. 1948); *Campbell v. Jones & Laughlin*, 70 F. Supp. 996 (W.D. Pa. 1947).)

(b) **Interruptions of sleep.** If the sleeping period is interrupted by a call to duty, the interruption must be counted as hours worked. If the period is interrupted to such an extent that the employee cannot get a reasonable night's sleep, the entire period must be counted. For enforcement purposes, the Divisons have adopted the rule that if the employee cannot get at least 5 hours' sleep during the scheduled period the entire time is working time. (See *Eustice v. Federal Cartridge Corp.*, 66 F. Supp. 55 (D. Minn. 1946).)

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## §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. (*Skelly Oil Co. v. Jackson*, 194 Okla. 183, 148 P. 2d 182 (Okla. Sup. Ct. 1944); *Thompson v. Loring Oil Co.*, 50 F. Supp. 213 (W.D. La. 1943).)

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## Preparatory and Concluding Activities

## §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.

(c) Among the activities included as an integral part of a principal activity are those closely related activities which are indispensable to its performance. If an employee in a chemical plant, for example, cannot perform his principal activities without putting on certain clothes, changing clothes on the employer's premises at the beginning and end of the workday would be an integral part of the employee's principal activity. On the other hand, if changing clothes is merely a convenience to the employee and not directly related to his principal activities, it would be considered as a "preliminary" or "postliminary" activity rather than a principal part of the activity. However, activities such as checking in and out and waiting in line to do so would not ordinarily be regarded as integral parts of the principal activity or activities.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## **§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 involved the extensive use of caustic and toxic materials. (*Steiner v. Mitchell*, 350 U.S. 247 (1956).) In another case, knifemen in a meatpacking plant sharpened their knives before and after their scheduled workday (*Mitchell v. King Packing Co.*, 350 U.S. 260 (1956)). In both cases the Supreme Court held that these activities are an integral and indispensable part of the employees' principal activities.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## **§785.26 Section 3(o) of the Fair Labor Standards Act.**

Section 3(o) of the Act provides an exception to the general rule for employees under collective bargaining agreements. This section provides for the exclusion from hours worked of time spent by an employee in changing clothes or washing at the beginning or end of each workday which was excluded from measured working time during the week involved by the express terms of or by custom or practice under a bona fide collective-bargaining agreement applicable to the particular employee. During any week in which such clothes-changing or washing time was not so excluded, it must be counted as hours worked if the changing of clothes or washing is indispensable to the performance of the employee's work or is required by law or by the rules of the employer. The same would be true if the changing of

clothes or washing was a preliminary or postliminary activity compensable by contract, custom, or practice as provided by section 4 of the Portal-to-Portal Act, and as discussed in [§ 785.9](#) and [part 790 of this chapter](#).

[[30 FR 9912](#), Aug. 10, 1965]

↑ [Back to the top](#)

#### Lectures, Meetings and Training Programs

### **§785.27 General.**

Attendance at lectures, meetings, training programs and similar activities need not be counted as working time if the following four criteria are met:

- (a) Attendance is outside of the employee's regular working hours;
- (b) Attendance is in fact voluntary;
- (c) The course, lecture, or meeting is not directly related to the employee's job; and
- (d) The employee does not perform any productive work during such attendance.

↑ [Back to the top](#)

### **§785.28 Involuntary attendance.**

Attendance is not voluntary, of course, if it is required by the employer. It is not voluntary in fact if the employee is given to understand or led to believe that his present working conditions or the continuance of his employment would be adversely affected by nonattendance.

↑ [Back to the top](#)

### **§785.29 Training directly related to employee's job.**

The training is directly related to the employee's job if it is designed to make the employee handle his job more effectively as distinguished from training him for another job, or to a new or additional skill. For example, a stenographer who is given a course in stenography is engaged in an activity to make her a better stenographer. Time spent in such a course given by the employer or under his auspices is hours worked. However, if the stenographer takes a course in bookkeeping, it may not be directly related to her job. Thus, the time she spends voluntarily in taking such a bookkeeping course, outside of regular working hours, need not be counted as working time. Where a training course is instituted for the bona fide purpose of preparing for advancement through upgrading the employee to a higher skill, and is not intended to make the employee more efficient in his present job, the training is not considered directly related to the employee's job even though the course incidentally improves his skill in doing his regular work.

[[30 FR 9912](#), Aug. 10, 1965]

↑ [Back to the top](#)

## **§785.30 Independent training.**

Of course, if an employee on his own initiative attends an independent school, college or independent trade school after hours, the time is not hours worked for his employer even if the courses are related to his job.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## **§785.31 Special situations.**

There are some special situations where the time spent in attending lectures, training sessions and courses of instruction is not regarded as hours worked. For example, an employer may establish for the benefit of his employees a program of instruction which corresponds to courses offered by independent bona fide institutions of learning. Voluntary attendance by an employee at such courses outside of working hours would not be hours worked even if they are directly related to his job, or paid for by the employer.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## **§785.32 Apprenticeship training.**

As an enforcement policy, time spent in an organized program of related, supplemental instruction by employees working under bona fide apprenticeship programs may be excluded from working time if the following criteria are met:

- (a) The apprentice is employed under a written apprenticeship agreement or program which substantially meets the fundamental standards of the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training of the U.S. Department of Labor; and
- (b) Such time does not involve productive work or performance of the apprentice's regular duties. If the above criteria are met the time spent in such related supplemental training shall not be counted as hours worked unless the written agreement specifically provides that it is hours worked. The mere payment or agreement to pay for time spent in related instruction does not constitute an agreement that such time is hours worked.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## Travel Time

## **§785.33 General.**

The principles which apply in determining whether or not time spent in travel is working time depend upon the kind of travel involved. The subject is discussed in [§§ 785.35 to 785.41](#), which are preceded by a brief discussion in [§ 785.34](#) of the Portal-to-Portal Act as it applies to travelttime.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## **§785.34 Effect of section 4 of the Portal-to-Portal Act.**

The Portal Act provides in section 4(a) that except as provided in subsection (b) no employer shall be liable for the failure to pay the minimum wage or overtime compensation for time spent in "walking, riding, or traveling to and from the actual place of performance of the principal activity or activities which such employee is employed to perform either prior to the time on any particular workday at which such employee commences, or subsequent to the time on any particular workday at which he ceases, such

principal activity or activities." Section 4(a) further provides that the use of an employer's vehicle for travel by an employee and activities that are incidental to the use of such vehicle for commuting are not considered principal activities when the use of such vehicle is within the normal commuting area for the employer's business or establishment and is subject to an agreement on the part of the employer and the employee or the representative of such employee. Subsection (b) provides that the employer shall not be relieved from liability if the activity is compensable by express contract or by custom or practice not inconsistent with an express contract. Thus travel time at the commencement or cessation of the workday which was originally considered as working time under the Fair Labor Standards Act (such as underground travel in mines or walking from time clock to work-bench) need not be counted as working time unless it is compensable by contract, custom or practice. If compensable by express contract or by custom or practice not inconsistent with an express contract, such traveltime must be counted in computing hours worked. However, ordinary travel from home to work (see [§ 785.35](#)) need not be counted as hours worked even if the employer agrees to pay for it. (See *Tennessee Coal, Iron & RR. Co. v. Musecoda Local*, 321 U.S. 590 (1946); *Anderson v. Mt. Clemens Pottery Co.*, 328 U.S. 690 (1946); *Walling v. Anaconda Copper Mining Co.*, 66 F. Supp. 913 (D. Mont. (1946).)

[[26 FR 190](#), Jan. 11, 1961, as amended at [76 FR 18860](#), Apr. 5, 2011]

↑ [Back to the top](#)

### **§785.35 Home to work, ordinary situation.**

An employee who travels from home before his regular workday and returns to his home at the end of the workday is engaged in ordinary home to work travel which is a normal incident of employment. This is true whether he works at a fixed location or at different job sites. Normal travel from home to work is not worktime.

↑ [Back to the top](#)

### **§785.36 Home to work in emergency situations.**

There may be instances when travel from home to work is overtime. For example, if an employee who has gone home after completing his day's work is subsequently called out at night to travel a substantial distance to perform an emergency job for one of his employer's customers all time spent on such travel is working time. The Divisions are taking no position on whether travel to the job and back home by an employee who receives an emergency call outside of his regular hours to report back to his regular place of business to do a job is working time.

↑ [Back to the top](#)

### **§785.37 Home to work on special one-day assignment in another city.**

A problem arises when an employee who regularly works at a fixed location in one city is given a special 1-day work assignment in another city. For example, an employee who works in Washington, DC, with regular working hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. may be given a special assignment in New York City, with instructions to leave Washington at 8 a.m. He arrives in New York at 12 noon, ready for work. The special assignment is completed at 3 p.m., and the employee arrives back in Washington at 7 p.m. Such travel cannot be regarded as ordinary home-to-work travel occasioned merely by the fact of employment. It was performed for the employer's benefit and at his special request to meet the needs of the particular and unusual assignment. It would thus qualify as an integral part of the "principal" activity which the employee was hired to perform on the workday in question; it is like travel involved in an emergency call (described in [§ 785.36](#)), or like travel that is all in the day's work (see [§ 785.38](#)). All the time involved, however, need not be counted. Since, except for the special assignment, the employee would have had to report to his regular work site, the travel between his home and the railroad depot

may be deducted, it being in the "home-to-work" category. Also, of course, the usual meal time would be deductible.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

### **§785.38 Travel that is all in the day's work.**

Time spent by an employee in travel as part of his principal activity, such as travel from job site to job site during the workday, must be counted as hours worked. Where an employee is required to report at a meeting place to receive instructions or to perform other work there, or to pick up and to carry tools, the travel from the designated place to the work place is part of the day's work, and must be counted as hours worked regardless of contract, custom, or practice. If an employee normally finishes his work on the premises at 5 p.m. and is sent to another job which he finishes at 8 p.m. and is required to return to his employer's premises arriving at 9 p.m., all of the time is working time. However, if the employee goes home instead of returning to his employer's premises, the travel after 8 p.m. is home-to-work travel and is not hours worked. (*Walling v. Mid-Continent Pipe Line Co.*, 143 F. 2d 308 (C. A. 10, 1944))

[↑ Back to the top](#)

### **§785.40 When private automobile is used in travel away from home community.**

If an employee is offered public transportation but requests permission to drive his car instead, the employer may count as hours worked either the time spent driving the car or the time he would have had to count as hours worked during working hours if the employee had used the public conveyance.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

### **§785.41 Work performed while traveling.**

Any work which an employee is required to perform while traveling must, of course, be counted as hours worked. An employee who drives a truck, bus, automobile, boat or airplane, or an employee who is required to ride therein as an assistant or helper, is working while riding, except during bona fide meal periods or when he is permitted to sleep in adequate facilities furnished by the employer.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

Adjusting Grievances, Medical Attention, Civic and Charitable Work, and Suggestion Systems

### **§785.42 Adjusting grievances.**

Time spent in adjusting grievances between an employer and employees during the time the employees are required to be on the premises is hours worked, but in the event a bona fide union is involved the counting of such time will, as a matter of enforcement policy, be left to the process of collective bargaining or to the custom or practice under the collective bargaining agreement.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## **§785.43 Medical attention.**

Time spent by an employee in waiting for and receiving medical attention on the premises or at the direction of the employer during the employee's normal working hours on days when he is working constitutes hours worked.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## **§785.44 Civic and charitable work.**

Time spent in work for public or charitable purposes at the employer's request, or under his direction or control, or while the employee is required to be on the premises, is working time. However, time spent voluntarily in such activities outside of the employee's normal working hours is not hours worked.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## **§785.45 Suggestion systems.**

Generally, time spent by employees outside of their regular working hours in developing suggestions under a general suggestion system is not working time, but if employees are permitted to work on suggestions during regular working hours the time spent must be counted as hours worked. Where an employee is assigned to work on the development of a suggestion, the time is considered hours worked.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## **Subpart D—Recording Working Time**

### **§785.46 Applicable regulations governing keeping of records.**

Section 11(c) of the Act authorizes the Secretary to promulgate regulations requiring the keeping of records of hours worked, wages paid and other conditions of employment. These regulations are published in [part 516 of this chapter](#). Copies of the regulations may be obtained on request.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

### **§785.47 Where records show insubstantial or insignificant periods of time.**

In recording working time under the Act, insubstantial or insignificant periods of time beyond the scheduled working hours, which cannot as a practical administrative matter be precisely recorded for payroll purposes, may be disregarded. The courts have held that such trifles are *de minimis*. (*Anderson v. Mt. Clemens Pottery Co.*, 328 U.S. 680 (1946)) This rule applies only where there are uncertain and indefinite periods of time involved of a few seconds or minutes duration, and where the failure to count such time is due to considerations justified by industrial realities. An employer may not arbitrarily fail to count as hours worked any part, however small, of the employee's fixed or regular working time or practically ascertainable period of time he is regularly required to spend on duties assigned to him. See *Glenn L. Martin Nebraska Co. v. Culkin*, 197 F. 2d 981, 987 (C.A. 8, 1952), cert. denied, 344 U.S. 866 (1952), rehearing denied, 344 U.S. 888 (1952), holding that working time amounting to \$1 of additional compensation a week is "not a trivial matter to a workingman," and was not *de minimis*; *Addison v. Huron Stevedoring Corp.*, 204 F. 2d 88, 95 (C.A. 2, 1953), cert. denied 346 U.S. 877, holding that "To disregard workweeks for which less than a dollar is due will produce capricious and unfair results." *Hawkins v. E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.*, 12 W.H. Cases 448, 27 Labor Cases, para. 69,094 (E.D. Va., 1955), holding that 10 minutes a day is not *de minimis*.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

## §785.48 Use of time clocks.

(a) ***Differences between clock records and actual hours worked.*** Time clocks are not required. In those cases where time clocks are used, employees who voluntarily come in before their regular starting time or remain after their closing time, do not have to be paid for such periods provided, of course, that they do not engage in any work. Their early or late clock punching may be disregarded. Minor differences between the clock records and actual hours worked cannot ordinarily be avoided, but major discrepancies should be discouraged since they raise a doubt as to the accuracy of the records of the hours actually worked.

(b) ***“Rounding” practices.*** It has been found that in some industries, particularly where time clocks are used, there has been the practice for many years of recording the employees' starting time and stopping time to the nearest 5 minutes, or to the nearest one-tenth or quarter of an hour. Presumably, this arrangement averages out so that the employees are fully compensated for all the time they actually work. For enforcement purposes this practice of computing working time will be accepted, provided that it is used in such a manner that it will not result, over a period of time, in failure to compensate the employees properly for all the time they have actually worked.

↑ [Back to the top](#)