FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT

MINIMUM WAGE AND OVERTIME

Unless an exemption applies, the District shall pay each of its employees not less than minimum wage for all hours worked. *29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)*

Unless an exemption applies, the District shall pay an employee not less than one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of forty in any workweek. *29 U.S.C. 207(a)(1); 29 CFR pt. 778*

BREAKS FOR NONEXEMPT EMPLOYEES

Rest periods of up to 20 minutes must be counted as hours worked. Coffee breaks or time for snacks are rest periods, not meal periods. *29 CFR 785.18*

Bona fide meal periods of 30 minutes or more are not counted as hours worked if the employee is completely relieved from duty. The employee is not relieved from duty if the employee is required to perform any duties, whether active or inactive, while eating. For example, an office employee who is required to eat at his or her desk is working while eating. It is not necessary that an employee be permitted to leave the premises if the employee is otherwise completely freed from duties during the meal period. *29 CFR 785.19*

BREAKS FOR NURSING MOTHERS

The District shall provide a nonexempt employee a reasonable break to express breast milk, each time the employee needs to express breast milk for her nursing child, for one year after the child's birth. The District shall provide a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.

The District is not required to compensate the employee receiving reasonable break time for any work time spent for such purpose.

A district that employs fewer than 50 employees is not subject to these requirements if the requirements would impose an undue hardship by causing the District significant difficulty or expense when considered in relation to the size, financial resources, nature, or structure of the District.

29 U.S.C. 207(r)

COMPENSATORY TIME

ACCRUAL

Nonexempt employees may receive, in lieu of overtime compensation, compensatory time off at a rate of not less than one and one-half hours for each hour of overtime work, pursuant to an agreement or understanding arrived at between the employer and employee before the performance of the work. Such agreement or understanding may be informal, such as when an employee works overtime knowing that the employer rewards overtime with compensatory time.

An employee may accrue not more than 240 hours of compensatory time. If the employee's overtime work included a public safety activity, an emergency response activity, or a seasonal activity, the employee may accrue not more than 480 hours of compensatory time. After the employee has reached these limits, the employee shall be paid overtime compensation for additional overtime work.

PAYMENT FOR ACCRUED TIME

Compensation paid to an employee for accrued compensatory time shall be paid at the regular rate earned by the employee at the time of payment. An employee who has accrued compensatory time off shall be paid for any unused compensatory time upon separation from employment at the rates set forth at 29 U.S.C. 207(o)(4).

USE

An employee who has requested the use of compensatory time shall be permitted to use such time within a reasonable period after making the request if the use of the compensatory time does not unduly disrupt the operations of the District.

The Fair Labor Standards Act does not prohibit the District from compelling the use of accrued compensatory time.

29 U.S.C. 207(o); Christensen v. Harris County, 529 U.S. 576 (2000); Houston Police Officers' Union v. City of Houston, 330 F.3d 298 (5th Cir. 2003)

EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

The minimum wage and overtime provisions do not apply to any employee employed in a bona fide executive, administrative, or professional capacity. *29 U.S.C. 213(a)(1)*

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS

The term "employee employed in a bona fide administrative capacity" includes an employee:

1. Compensated for services on a salary or fee basis at a rate of not less than $455 per week exclusive of board, lodging, or other facilities, or on a salary basis that is at least equal to the entrance salary for teachers in the District by which employed; and

2. Whose primary duty is performing administrative functions directly related to academic instruction or training in the District or department or subdivision thereof.

"Performing administrative functions directly related to academic instruction or training" means work related to the academic operations and functions in a school rather than to administration along the lines of general business operations. Such academic administrative functions include operations directly in the field of education. Jobs relating to areas outside the educational field are not within the definition of academic administration.

Employees engaged in academic administrative functions include:

1. The Superintendent or other head of an elementary or secondary school system, and any assistants, responsible for administration of such matters as curriculum, quality and methods of instructing, measuring and testing the learning potential and achievement of students, establishing and maintaining academic and grading standards, and other aspects of the teaching program;

2. The principal and any vice principals responsible for the operation of an elementary or secondary school;

3. Academic counselors who perform work such as administering school testing programs, assisting students with academic problems and advising students concerning degree requirements; and

4. Other employees with similar responsibilities.

Jobs relating to building management and maintenance, jobs relating to the health of the students, and academic staff such as social workers, psychologists, lunch room managers, or dietitians do not perform academic administrative functions, although such employees may qualify for another exemption.

29 CFR 541.204

SALARY BASIS

To qualify as an exempt executive, administrative, or professional employee, the employee must be compensated on a salary basis, unless the employee is a teacher. Subject to the exceptions listed in the rule, an employee must receive the full salary for any week in which the employee performs any work, without regard to the number of days or hours worked. A district that makes improper deductions from salary shall lose the exemption if the facts demonstrate that the District did not intend to pay exempt employees on a salary basis. *29 CFR 541.600, .602(a), .603*

PARTIAL-DAY DEDUCTIONS

A District employee who otherwise meets the salary basis requirements shall not be disqualified from exemption on the basis that the employee is paid according to a pay system established by statute, ordinance, or regulation, or by a policy or practice established pursuant to principles of public accountability, under which the employee accrues personal leave and sick leave and which requires the employee's pay to be reduced or the employee to be placed on leave without pay for absences for personal reasons or because of illness or injury of less than one workday when accrued leave is not used by an employee because:

1. Permission for its use has not been sought or has been sought and denied;
2. Accrued leave has been exhausted; or
3. The employee chooses to use leave without pay.

Deductions from the pay of a District employee for absences due to a budget-required furlough shall not disqualify the employee from being paid on a salary basis except in the workweek in which the furlough occurs and for which the employee's pay is accordingly reduced.

29 CFR 541.710

SAFE HARBOR POLICY

If the District has a clearly communicated policy that prohibits improper pay deductions and includes a complaint mechanism, reimburses employees for any improper deductions, and makes a good faith commitment to comply in the future, the District will not lose the deduction unless the District willfully violates the policy by continuing to make improper deductions after receiving employee complaints.

The best evidence of a clearly communicated policy is a written policy that was distributed to employees before the improper pay deductions by, for example, providing a copy of the policy to employees upon hire, publishing the policy in an employee handbook, or publishing the policy on the District's intranet.

29 CFR 541.603(d)

TEACHERS

The term "employee employed in a bona fide professional capacity" includes any employee with a primary duty of teaching, tutoring, instructing, or lecturing in the activity of imparting knowledge and who is employed and engaged in this activity as a teacher in an elementary or secondary school system by which the employee is employed. The salary basis requirements do not apply to teaching professionals.

Exempt teachers include:

1. Regular academic teachers;
2. Teachers of kindergarten or nursery school pupils;
3. Teachers of gifted or disabled children;
4. Teachers of skilled and semi-skilled trades and occupations;
5. Teachers engaged in automobile driving instruction;
6. Home economics teachers; and

7. Vocal or instrumental music instructors.

Those faculty members who are engaged as teachers but also spend a considerable amount of their time in extracurricular activities such as coaching athletic teams or acting as moderators or advisors in such areas as drama, speech, debate, or journalism are engaged in teaching. Such activities are a recognized part of the schools' responsibility in contributing to the educational development of the student.

The possession of an elementary or secondary teacher's certificate provides a clear means of identifying the individuals contemplated as being within the scope of the exemption for teaching professionals. Teachers who possess a teaching certificate qualify for the exemption regardless of the terminology (e.g., permanent, conditional, standard, provisional, temporary, emergency, or unlimited) used by the state to refer to different kinds of certificates. However, a teacher who is not certified may be considered for exemption, provided that such individual is employed as a teacher by the employing school or school system.

29 CFR 541.303

WAGE AND HOUR RECORDS

The District shall maintain and preserve payroll or other records for nonexempt employees containing the information required by the regulations under the Fair Labor Standards Act. *29 CFR 516.2(a)*

PAYDAY LAW EXEMPTION

The Texas Payday Law does not apply to the state or a political subdivision. *Labor Code 61.003*