

§ 1620.10 Meaning of “wages.”

Under the EPA, the term “wages” generally includes all payments made to [or on behalf of] an employee as remuneration for employment. The term includes all forms of compensation irrespective of the time of payment, whether paid periodically or deferred until a later date, and whether called wages, salary, profit sharing, expense account, monthly minimum, bonus, uniform cleaning allowance, hotel accommodations, use of company car, gasoline allowance, or some other name. Fringe benefits are deemed to be remuneration for employment. “Wages” as used in the EPA (the purpose of which is to assure men and women equal remuneration for equal work) will therefore include payments which may not be counted under section 3(m) of the FLSA toward the minimum wage (the purpose of which is to assure employees a minimum amount of remuneration unconditionally available in cash or in board, lodging or other facilities). Similarly, the provisions of section 7(e) of the FLSA under which some payments may be excluded in computing an employee’s “regular rate” of pay for purposes of section 7 do not authorize the exclusion of any such remuneration from the “wages” of an employee in applying the EPA. Thus, vacation and holiday pay, and premium payments for work on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, regular days of rest or other days or hours in excess or outside of the employee’s regular days or hours of work are deemed remuneration for employment and therefore wage payments that must be considered in applying the EPA, even though not a part of the employee’s “regular rate.”

§ 1620.11 Fringe benefits.

(a) “Fringe benefits” includes, e.g., such terms as medical, hospital, accident, life insurance and retirement benefits; profit sharing and bonus plans; leave; and other such concepts.

(b) It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate between men and women performing equal work with regard to fringe benefits. Differences in the application of fringe benefit plans which are based upon sex-based actuarial

studies cannot be justified as based on “any other factor other than sex.”

(c) Where an employer conditions benefits available to employees and their spouses and families on whether the employee is the “head of the household” or “principal wage earner” in the family unit, the overall implementation of the plan will be closely scrutinized.

(d) It is unlawful for an employer to make available benefits for the spouses or families of employees of one gender where the same benefits are not made available for the spouses or families of opposite gender employees.

(e) It shall not be a defense under the EPA to a charge of sex discrimination in benefits that the cost of such benefits is greater with respect to one sex than the other.

(f) It is unlawful for an employer to have a pension or retirement plan which, with respect to benefits, establishes different optional or compulsory retirement ages based on sex or which otherwise differentiates in benefits on the basis of sex.

[51 FR 29816, Aug. 20, 1986; 51 FR 32636, Sept. 15, 1986]

§ 1620.12 Wage “rate.”

(a) The term wage “rate,” as used in the EPA, refers to the standard or measure by which an employee’s wage is determined and is considered to encompass all rates of wages whether calculated on a time, commission, piece, job incentive, profit sharing, bonus, or other basis. The term includes the rate at which overtime compensation or other special remuneration is paid as well as the rate at which straight time compensation for ordinary work is paid. It further includes the rate at which a draw, advance, or guarantee is paid against a commission settlement.

(b) Where a higher wage rate is paid to one gender than the other for the performance of equal work, the higher rate serves as a wage standard. When a violation of the Act is established, the higher rate paid for equal work is the standard to which the lower rate must be raised to remedy a violation of the Act.