

by the employee must have a finality that goes with unlimited authority and a complete absence of review. The decisions made as a result of the exercise of discretion and independent judgment may consist of recommendations for action rather than the actual taking of action. The fact that an employee's decision may be subject to review and that upon occasion the decisions are revised or reversed after review does not mean that the employee is not exercising discretion and independent judgment within the meaning of the regulations in subpart A of this part. For example, the assistant to the president of a large corporation may regularly reply to correspondence addressed to the president. Typically, such an assistant will submit the more important replies to the president for review before they are sent out. Upon occasion, after review, the president may alter or discard the prepared reply and direct that another be sent instead. This section by the president would not, however, destroy the exempt character of the assistant's function, and does not mean that he does not exercise discretion and independent judgment in answering correspondence and in deciding which replies may be sent out without review by the president.

(2) The policies formulated by the credit manager of a large corporation may be subject to review by higher company officials who may approve or disapprove these policies. The management consultant who has made a study of the operations of a business and who has drawn a proposed change in organization, may have the plan reviewed or revised by his superiors before it is submitted to the client. The purchasing agent may be required to consult with top management officials before making a purchase commitment for raw materials in excess of the contemplated plant needs for a stated period, say 6 months. These employees exercise discretion and independent judgment within the meaning of the regulations despite the fact that their decisions or recommendations are reviewed at a higher level.

(f) *Distinguished from loss through neglect.* A distinction must also be made between the exercise of discretion and independent judgment with respect to

matters of consequence and the cases where serious consequences may result from the negligence of an employee, the failure to follow instruction or procedures, the improper application of skills, or the choice of the wrong techniques. The operator of a very intricate piece of machinery, for example, may cause a complete stoppage of production or a breakdown of his very expensive machine merely by pressing the wrong button. A bank teller who is engaged in receipt and disbursement of money at a teller's window and in related routine bookkeeping duties may, by crediting the wrong account with a deposit, cause his employer to suffer a large financial loss. An inspector charged with responsibility for loading oil onto a ship may, by not applying correct techniques fail to notice the presence of foreign ingredients in the tank with resulting contamination of the cargo and serious loss to his employer. In these cases, the work of the employee does not require the exercise of discretion and independent judgment within the meaning of the regulations in subpart A of this part.

(g) *Customarily and regularly.* The work of an exempt administrative employee must require the exercise of discretion and independent judgment customarily and regularly. The phrase "customarily and regularly" signifies a frequency which must be greater than occasional but which, of course, may be less than constant. The requirement will be met by the employee who normally and recurrently is called upon to exercise and does exercise discretion and independent judgment in the day-to-day performance of his duties. The requirement is not met by the occasional exercise of discretion and independent judgment.

§ 541.208 Directly and closely related.

(a) As indicated in § 541.202, work which is directly and closely related to the performance of the work described in § 541.2 is considered exempt work. Some illustrations may be helpful in clarifying the differences between such work and work which is unrelated or only remotely related to the work described in § 541.2.

(b)(1) For purposes of illustration, the case of a high-salaried management consultant about whose exempt status as an administrative employee there is no doubt will be assumed. The particular employee is employed by a firm of consultants and performs work in which he customarily and regularly exercises discretion and independent judgment. The work consists primarily of analyzing, and recommending changes in, the business operations of his employer's client. This work falls in the category of exempt work described in § 541.2.

(2) In the course of performing that work, the consultant makes extensive notes recording the flow of work and materials through the office and plant of the client. Standing alone or separated from the primary duty such notemaking would be routine in nature. However, this is work without which the more important work cannot be performed properly. It is "directly and closely related" to the administrative work and is therefore exempt work. Upon his return to the office of his employer the consultant personally types his report and draws, first in rough and then in final form, a proposed table of organization to be submitted with it. Although all this work may not be essential to the performance of his more important work, it is all directly and closely related to that work and should be considered exempt. While it is possible to assign the typing and final drafting to nonexempt employees and in fact it is frequently the practice to do so, it is not required as a condition of exemption that it be so delegated.

(3) Finally, if because this particular employee has a special skill in such work, he also drafts tables or organization proposed by other consultants, he would then be performing routine work wholly unrelated, or at best only remotely related, to his more important work. Under such conditions, the drafting is nonexempt.

(c) Another illustration is the credit manager who makes and administers the credit policy of his employer. Establishing credit limits for customers and authorizing the shipment of orders on credit, including the decisions to exceed or otherwise vary these limits in

the case of particular customers, would be exempt work of the kind specifically described in § 541.2. Work which is directly and closely related to these exempt duties may include such activities as checking the status of accounts to determine whether the credit limit would be exceeded by the shipment of a new order, removing credit reports from the files for analysis and writing letters giving credit data and experience to other employers or credit agencies. On the other hand, any general office or bookkeeping work is nonexempt work. For instance, posting to the accounts receivable ledger would be only remotely related to his administrative work and must be considered non-exempt.

(d) One phase of the work of an administrative assistant to a bona fide executive or administrative employee provides another illustration. The work of determining whether to answer correspondence personally, call it to his superior's attention, or route it to someone else for reply requires the exercise of discretion and independent judgment and is exempt work of the kind described in § 541.2. Opening the mail for the purpose of reading it to make the decisions indicated will be directly and closely related to the administrative work described. However, merely opening mail and placing it unread before his superior or some other person would be related only remotely, if at all, to any work requiring the exercise of discretion and independent judgment.

(e) The following additional examples may also be of value in applying these principles. A traffic manager is employed to handle the company's transportation problems. The exempt work performed by such an employee would include planning the most economical and quickest routes for shipping merchandise to and from the plant, contracting for common-carrier and other transportation facilities, negotiating with carriers for adjustments for damages to merchandise in transit and making the necessary rearrangements resulting from delays, damages, or irregularities in transit. This employee may also spend part of his time taking city orders (for local deliveries) over the telephone. The order-taking is a

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routine function not directly and closely related to the exempt work and must be considered nonexempt.

(f) An office manager who does not supervise two or more employees would not meet the requirements for exemption as an executive employee but may possibly qualify for exemption as an administrative employee. Such an employee may perform administrative duties, such as the executive of the employer's credit policy, the management of the company's traffic, purchasing, and other responsible office work requiring the customary and regular exercise of discretion and judgment, which are clearly exempt. On the other hand, this office manager may perform all the bookkeeping, prepare the confidential or regular payrolls, and send out monthly statements of account. These latter activities are not directly and closely related to the exempt functions and are not exempt.

§ 541.209 Percentage limitations on nonexempt work.

(a) Under § 541.2(d), an employee will not qualify for exemption as an administrative employee if he devotes more than 20 percent, or, in the case of an employee of a retail or service establishment if he devotes as much as 40 percent, of his hours worked in the workweek to nonexempt work; that is, to activities which are not directly and closely related to the performance of the work described in § 541.2 (a) through (c).

(b) This test is applied on a workweek basis and the percentage of time spent on nonexempt work is computed on the time worked by the employee.

(c) The tolerance for nonexempt work allows the performance of nonexempt manual or nonmanual work within the percentages allowed for all types of nonexempt work.

(d) Refer to § 541.112(b) for the definition of a retail or service establishment as this term is used in paragraph (a) of this section.

§ 541.210 Trainees, administrative.

The exemption is applicable to an employee employed in a bona fide administrative capacity and does not include employees training for employment in an administrative capacity

who are not actually performing the duties of an administrative employee.

§ 541.211 Amount of salary or fees required.

(a) Except as otherwise noted in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, compensation on a salary or fee basis at a rate of not less than \$155 a week, exclusive of board, lodging or other facilities, is required for exemption as an administrative employee. The requirement will be met if the employee is compensated biweekly on a salary basis of \$310, semimonthly on a salary basis of \$335.84, or monthly on a salary basis of \$671.67.

(b) In Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa, the salary test for exemption as an administrative employee is \$125 per week for other than an employee of the Federal Government.

(c) In the case of academic administrative personnel, the compensation requirement for exemption as an administrative employee may be met either by the payment described in paragraph (a) or (b) of this section, whichever is applicable, or alternatively by compensation on a salary basis in an amount which is at least equal to the entrance salary for teachers in the school system, or educational establishment or institution by which the employee is employed.

(d) The payment of the required salary must be exclusive of board, lodging, or other facilities; that is, free and clear. On the other hand, the regulations in subpart A of this part do not prohibit the sale of such facilities to administrative employees on a cash basis if they are negotiated in the same manner as similar transactions with other persons.

[38 FR 11390, May 7, 1973, as amended at 40 FR 7093, Feb. 19, 1975]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: Paragraphs (a) and (b) in § 541.211 were revised at 46 FR 3014, Jan. 13, 1981. In accordance with the President's Memorandum of January 29, 1981 (46 FR 11227, Feb. 6, 1981), the effective date was postponed indefinitely at 46 FR 11972, Feb. 12, 1981.

The text of paragraphs (a) and (b) set forth above remains in effect pending further action by the issuing agency. The text of the postponed regulation appears below.