

benefit. (It should also be noted that in the case of joint employer-employee contributory plans, where the employee contributions are not paid over to a third person or to a trustee unaffiliated with the employer, violations of the Act may result if the employee contributions cut into the required minimum or overtime rates. See part 531 of this chapter.) Although an employer's contributions made to a trustee or third person pursuant to a benefit plan must be irrevocably made, this does not prevent return to the employer of sums which he had paid in excess of the contributions actually called for by the plan, as where such excess payments result from error or from the necessity of marking payments to cover the estimated cost of contributions at a time when the exact amount of the necessary contributions under the plan is not yet ascertained. For example, a benefit plan may provide for definite insurance benefits for employees in the event of the happening of a specified contingency such as death, sickness, accident, etc., and may provide that the cost of such definite benefits, either in full or any balance in excess of specified employee contributions, will be borne by the employer. In such a case the return by the insurance company to the employer of sums paid by him in excess of the amount required to provide the benefits which, under the plan, are to be provided through contributions by the employer, will not be deemed a recapture or diversion by the employer of contributions made pursuant to the plan.

(5) The plan must not give an employee the right to assign his benefits under the plan nor the option to receive any part of the employer's contributions in cash instead of the benefits under the plan: *Provided, however*, That if a plan otherwise qualified as a bona fide benefit plan under section 7(e)(4) of the Act, it will still be regarded as a bona fide plan even though it provides, as an incidental part thereof, for the payment to an employee in cash of all or a part of the amount standing to his credit (i) at the time of the severance of the employment relation due to causes other than retirement, disability, or death, or (ii) upon

proper termination of the plan, or (iii) during the course of his employment under circumstances specified in the plan and not inconsistent with the general purposes of the plan to provide the benefits described in section 7(e)(4) of the Act.

(b) *Plans under section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code.* Where the benefit plan or trust has been approved by the Bureau of Internal Revenue as satisfying the requirements of section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code in the absence of evidence to the contrary, the plan or trust will be considered to meet the conditions specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (4), and (5) of this section.

[33 FR 986, Jan. 26, 1968, as amended at 46 FR 7312, Jan. 23, 1981]

#### PAYMENTS NOT FOR HOURS WORKED

#### § 778.216 The provisions of section 7(e)(2) of the Act.

Section 7(e)(2) of the Act provides that the term "regular rate" shall not be deemed to include "payments made for occasional periods when no work is performed due to vacation, holiday, illness, failure of the employer to provide sufficient work, or other similar cause; reasonable payments for traveling expenses, or other expenses, incurred by an employee in the furtherance of his employer's interests and properly reimbursable by the employer; and other similar payments to an employee which are not made as compensation for his hours of employment \* \* \*." However, since such payments are not made as compensation for the employee's hours worked in any workweek, no part of such payments can be credited toward overtime compensation due under the Act.

#### § 778.217 Reimbursement for expenses.

(a) *General rule.* Where an employee incurs expenses on his employer's behalf or where he is required to expend sums solely by reason of action taken for the convenience of his employer, section 7(e)(2) is applicable to reimbursement for such expenses. Payments made by the employer to cover such expenses are not included in the employee's regular rate (if the amount of the reimbursement reasonably approximates the expenses incurred).