

Wage and Hour Division, Labor

§ 778.209

workday, the extra \$2.50 will be excluded from the regular rate and may be credited to overtime pay due under the Act. Similarly, if the straight time rate established in good faith by the contract should be higher because of handling dangerous or obnoxious cargo, recognition of skill differentials, or similar reasons, so as to be \$7.50 an hour during the hours established as the basic or normal or regular workday or workweek, and a premium rate of \$11.25 an hour is paid for the same work performed during other hours of the day or week, the extra \$3.75 may be excluded from the regular rate of pay and may be credited toward overtime pay due under the Act. Similar principles are applicable where agreements following this general pattern exist in other industries.

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§ 778.207 Other types of contract premium pay distinguished.

(a) *Overtime premiums are those defined by the statute.* The various types of contract premium rates which provide extra compensation qualifying as overtime premiums to be excluded from the regular rate (under section 7(e) (5), (6), and (7) and credited toward statutory overtime pay requirements (under section 7(h)) have been described in §§ 778.201 through 778.206. The plain wording of the statute makes it clear that extra compensation provided by premium rates other than those described cannot be treated as overtime premiums. Wherever such other premiums are paid, they must be included in the employee's regular rate before statutory overtime compensation is computed; no part of such premiums may be credited toward statutory overtime pay.

(b) *Nonovertime premiums.* The Act requires the inclusion in the regular rate of such extra premiums as nightshift differentials (whether they take the form of a percent of the base rate or an addition of so many cents per hour) and premiums paid for hazardous, arduous or dirty work. It also requires inclusion of any extra compensation which is paid as an incentive for the rapid performance of work, and since any extra compensation in order to qualify as an overtime premium must

be provided by a premium rate per hour, except in the special case of pieceworkers as discussed in § 778.418, lump sum premiums which are paid without regard to the number of hours worked are not overtime premiums and must be included in the regular rate. For example, where an employer pays 8 hours' pay for a particular job whether it is performed in 8 hours or in less time, the extra premium of 2 hours' pay received by an employee who completes the job in 6 hours must be included in his regular rate. Similarly, where an employer pays for 8 hours at premium rates for a job performed during the overtime hours whether it is completed in 8 hours or less, no part of the premium paid qualifies as overtime premium under sections 7(e) (5), (6), or (7). (For a further discussion of this and related problems, see §§ 778.308 to 778.314.)

BONUSES

§ 778.208 Inclusion and exclusion of bonuses in computing the "regular rate."

Section 7(e) of the Act requires the inclusion in the regular rate of all remuneration for employment except seven specified types of payments. Among these excludable payments are discretionary bonuses, gifts and payments in the nature of gifts on special occasions, contributions by the employer to certain welfare plans and payments made by the employer pursuant to certain profit-sharing, thrift and savings plans. These are discussed in §§ 778.211 through 778.214. Bonuses which do not qualify for exclusion from the regular rate as one of these types must be totaled in with other earnings to determine the regular rate on which overtime pay must be based. Bonus payments are payments made in addition to the regular earnings of an employee. For a discussion on the bonus form as an evasive bookkeeping device, see §§ 778.502 and 778.503.

§ 778.209 Method of inclusion of bonus in regular rate.

(a) *General rules.* Where a bonus payment is considered a part of the regular rate at which an employee is employed, it must be included in computing his

§ 778.210

regular hourly rate of pay and overtime compensation. No difficulty arises in computing overtime compensation if the bonus covers only one weekly pay period. The amount of the bonus is merely added to the other earnings of the employee (except statutory exclusions) and the total divided by total hours worked. Under many bonus plans, however, calculations of the bonus may necessarily be deferred over a period of time longer than a workweek. In such a case the employer may disregard the bonus in computing the regular hourly rate until such time as the amount of the bonus can be ascertained. Until that is done he may pay compensation for overtime at one and one-half times the hourly rate paid by the employee, exclusive of the bonus. When the amount of the bonus can be ascertained, it must be apportioned back over the workweeks of the period during which it may be said to have been earned. The employee must then receive an additional amount of compensation for each workweek that he worked overtime during the period equal to one-half of the hourly rate of pay allocable to the bonus for that week multiplied by the number of statutory overtime hours worked during the week.

(b) *Allocation of bonus where bonus earnings cannot be identified with particular workweeks.* If it is impossible to allocate the bonus among the workweeks of the period in proportion to the amount of the bonus actually earned each week, some other reasonable and equitable method of allocation must be adopted. For example, it may be reasonable and equitable to assume that the employee earned an equal amount of bonus each week of the period to which the bonus relates, and if the facts support this assumption additional compensation for each overtime week of the period may be computed and paid in an amount equal to one-half of the average hourly increase in pay resulting from bonus allocated to the week, multiplied by the number of statutory overtime hours worked in that week. Or, if there are facts which make it inappropriate to assume equal bonus earnings for each workweek, it may be reasonable and equitable to assume that the employee

29 CFR Ch. V (7-1-05 Edition)

earned an equal amount of bonus each hour of the pay period and the resultant hourly increase may be determined by dividing the total bonus by the number of hours worked by the employee during the period for which it is paid. The additional compensation due for the overtime workweeks in the period may then be computed by multiplying the total number of statutory overtime hours worked in each such workweek during the period by one-half this hourly increase.

§ 778.210 Percentage of total earnings as bonus.

In some instances the contract or plan for the payment of a bonus may also provide for the simultaneous payment of overtime compensation due on the bonus. For example, a contract made prior to the performance of services may provide for the payment of additional compensation in the way of a bonus at the rate of 10 percent of the employee's straight-time earnings, and 10 percent of his overtime earnings. In such instances, of course, payments according to the contract will satisfy in full the overtime provisions of the Act and no recomputation will be required. This is not true, however, where this form of payment is used as a device to evade the overtime requirements of the Act rather than to provide actual overtime compensation, as described in §§ 778.502 and 778.503.

§ 778.211 Discretionary bonuses.

(a) *Statutory provision.* Section 7(e)(3)(a) of the Act provides that the regular rate shall not be deemed to include "sums paid in recognition of services performed during a given period if * * * (a) both the fact that payment is to be made and the amount of the payment are determined at the sole discretion of the employer at or near the end of the period and not pursuant to any prior contract, agreement, or promise causing the employee to expect such payments regularly * * *". Such sums may not, however, be credited toward overtime compensation due under the Act.

(b) *Discretionary character of excluded bonus.* In order for a bonus to qualify for exclusion as a discretionary bonus under section 7(e)(3)(a) the employer