

## § 779.7

on matters which they discuss in detail and which this part does not undertake to do. They include part 776 of this chapter, discussing general coverage, including the employer-employee relationship under the Act; part 531 of this chapter, discussing methods of payment of wages; part 778 of this chapter, discussing computation and payment of overtime compensation; part 785 of this chapter, discussing the calculation of hours worked; and part 800 of this chapter, discussing equal pay for equal work.

### INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LAW

#### § 779.7 **Significance of official interpretations.**

The regulations in this part contain the official interpretations of the Department of Labor with respect to the application under described circumstances of the provisions of law which they discuss. These interpretations indicate the construction of the law which the Secretary of Labor and the Administrator believe to be correct and which will guide them in the performance of their duties under the Act unless and until they are otherwise directed by authoritative decisions of the courts or conclude, upon reexamination of an interpretation, that it is incorrect.

#### § 779.8 **Basic support for interpretations.**

The ultimate decisions on interpretations of the Act are made by the courts (*Mitchell v. Zachry*, 362 U.S. 310; *Kirschbaum v. Walling*, 316 U.S. 517). Court decisions supporting interpretations contained in this bulletin are cited where it is believed they may be helpful. On matters which have not been determined by the courts, it is necessary for the Secretary of Labor and the Administrator to reach conclusions as to the meaning and the application of provisions of the law in order to carry out their responsibilities of administration and enforcement (*Skidmore v. Swift*, 323 U.S. 134). In order that these positions may be made known to persons who may be affected by them, official interpretations are issued by the Administrator on the advice of the Solicitor of Labor, as au-

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

thorized by the Secretary (Reorg. Pl. 6 of 1950, 64 Stat. 1263; Gen. Ord. 45A, May 24, 1950; 15 FR 3290). As included in the regulations in this part, these interpretations are believed to express the intent of the law as reflected in its provisions as constructed by the courts and evidenced by its legislative history. References to pertinent legislative history are made in this part where it appears that they will contribute to a better understanding of the interpretations.

#### § 779.9 **Reliance on interpretations.**

The interpretations of the law contained in this part are official interpretations which may be relied upon as provided in section 10 of the Portal-to-Portal Act of 1947. In addition, the Supreme Court has recognized that such interpretations of the Act "provide a practical guide to employers and employees as to how the office representing the public interest in its enforcement will seek to apply it" and "constitute a body of experience and informed judgment to which courts and litigants may properly resort for guidance." Further, as stated by the Court: "Good administration of the Act and good judicial administration alike require that the standards of public enforcement and those for determining private rights shall be at variance only where justified by very good reasons." (*Skidmore v. Swift*, 323 U.S. 134.) Some of the interpretations in subpart D of this part relating to the scope of the exemption provided for retail or service establishments are interpretations of this exemption as it appeared in the original Act before amendment in 1949 and 1961, which have remained unchanged because they were consistent with the amendments. These interpretations may be said to have Congressional sanction because "When Congress amended the Act in 1949 it provided that pre-1949 rulings and interpretations by the Administrator should remain in effect unless inconsistent with the statute as amended. 63 Stat. 920." (*Mitchell v. Kentucky Finance Co.*, 359 U.S. 290.)