

#### § 525.4

(g) *Employ* is defined in FLSA as *to suffer or permit to work*. An employment relationship arises whenever an individual, including an individual with a disability, is suffered or permitted to work. The determination of an employment relationship does not depend upon the level of performance or whether the work is of some therapeutic benefit. However, an individual does not become an employee if engaged in such activities as making craft products where the individual voluntarily participates in such activities and the products become the property of the individual making them, or all of the funds resulting from the sale of the products are divided among the participants in the activity or are used in purchasing additional materials to make craft products.

(h) *Special minimum wage* is a wage authorized under a certificate issued to an employer under this part that is less than the statutory minimum wage.

(i) *Commensurate wage* is a special minimum wage paid to a worker with a disability which is based on the worker's individual productivity in proportion to the wage and productivity of experienced nondisabled workers performing essentially the same type, quality, and quantity of work in the vicinity in which the individual under certificate is employed. For example, the commensurate wage of a worker with a disability who is 75% as productive as the average experienced nondisabled worker, taking into consideration the type, quality, and quantity of work of the disabled worker, would be set at 75% of the wage paid to the nondisabled worker. For purposes of these regulations, a commensurate wage is always a special minimum wage, *i.e.*, a wage below the statutory minimum.

(j) *Vicinity* or *locality* means the geographic area from which the labor force of the community is drawn.

(k) *Experienced worker* means a worker who has learned the basic elements or requirements of the work to be performed, ordinarily by completion of a probationary or training period. Typically, such a worker will have received at least one pay raise after successful completion of the probationary or training period.

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#### § 525.4 Patient workers.

With respect to patient workers, as defined in § 525.3(e), a major factor in determining if an employment relationship exists is whether the work performed is of any consequential economic benefit to the institution. Generally, work shall be considered to be of consequential economic benefit if it is of the type that workers without disabilities normally perform, in whole or in part in the institution or elsewhere. However, a patient does not become an employee if he or she merely performs personal housekeeping chores, such as maintaining his or her own quarters, or receives a token remuneration in connection with such services. It may also be possible for patients in family-like settings such as group homes to rotate or share household tasks or chores without becoming employees.

#### § 525.5 Wage payments.

(a) An individual whose earning or productive capacity is not impaired for the work being performed cannot be employed under a certificate issued pursuant to this part and must be paid at least the applicable minimum wage. An individual whose earning or productive capacity is impaired to the extent that the individual is unable to earn at least the applicable minimum wage may be paid a commensurate wage, but only after the employer has obtained a certificate authorizing payment of special minimum wages from the appropriate office of the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor.

(b) With respect to patient workers employed in institutions, no deductions can be made from such individuals' commensurate wages to cover the cost of room, board, or other services provided by the facility. Such an individual must receive his or her wages free and clear, except for amounts deducted for taxes assessed against the employee and any voluntary wage assignments directed by the employee. (See part 531 of this title.) However, it is not the intention of these regulations to preclude the institution thereafter from assessing or collecting charges for room, board, and other services actually provided to an individual to the extent permitted by applicable Federal or State law and on

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the same basis as it assesses and collects from nonworking patients.

### § 525.6 Compensable time.

Individuals employed subject to this part must be compensated for all hours worked. Compensable time includes not only those hours during which the individual is actually performing productive work but also includes those hours when no work is performed but the individual is required by the employer to remain available for the next assignment. However, where the individual is completely relieved from duty and is not required to remain available for the next assignment, such time will not be considered compensable time. For example, an individual employed by a rehabilitation facility would not be engaged in a compensable activity where such individual is completely relieved from duty but is provided therapy or the opportunity to participate in an alternative program or activity in the facility not involving work and not directly related to the worker's job (e.g., self-help skills training, recreation, job seeking skills training, independent living skills, or adult basic education). The burden of establishing that such hours are not compensable rests with the facility and such hours must be clearly distinguishable from compensable hours. (For further information on compensable time in general under FLSA, see part 785 of this title.)

### § 525.7 Application for certificates.

(a) Application for a certificate may be filed by any employer with the Regional Office of the Wage and Hour Division having administrative jurisdiction over the geographic area in which the employment is to take place.

(b) The employer shall provide answers to all of the applicable questions contained on the application form provided by the Regional Office.

(c) The application shall be signed by the employer or the employer's authorized representative.

### § 525.8 Special provisions for temporary authority.

(a) Temporary authority may be granted to an employer permitting the employment of workers with disabilities pursuant to a vocational rehabili-

tation program of the Veterans Administration for veterans with a service-incurred disability or a vocational rehabilitation program administered by a State agency.

(b) Temporary authority is effective for 90 days from the date the appropriate section of the application form is signed and completed by the duly designated representative of the State agency or the Veterans Administration. Such authority may not be renewed or extended by the issuing agency.

(c) The signed application constitutes the temporary authority to employ workers with disabilities at special minimum wage rates. A copy of the application must be forwarded within 10 days to the appropriate Regional Office of the Wage and Hour Division. Upon receipt, the application will be reviewed and, where appropriate, a certificate will be issued by the Regional Office. Where additional information is required or certification is denied, the applicant will receive notification from the Regional Office.

### § 525.9 Criteria for employment of workers with disabilities under certificates at special minimum wage rates.

(a) In order to determine that special minimum wage rates are necessary in order to prevent the curtailment of opportunities for employment, the following criteria will be considered:

(1) The nature and extent of the disabilities of the individuals employed as these disabilities relate to the individuals' productivity;

(2) The prevailing wages of experienced employees not disabled for the job who are employed in the vicinity in industry engaged in work comparable to that performed at the special minimum wage rate;

(3) The productivity of the workers with disabilities compared to the norm established for nondisabled workers through the use of a verifiable work measurement method (see § 525.12(h)) or the productivity of experienced nondisabled workers employed in the vicinity on comparable work; and,