

§ 531.54

designate amounts to be added to their bills as tips. Special gifts in forms other than money or its equivalent as above described such as theater tickets, passes, or merchandise, are not counted as tips received by the employee for purposes of the Act.

§ 531.54 Tip pooling.

Where employees practice tip splitting, as where waiters give a portion of their tips to the busboys, both the amounts retained by the waiters and those given the busboys are considered tips of the individuals who retain them, in applying the provisions of section 3(m) and 3(t). Similarly, where an accounting is made to an employer for his information only or in furtherance of a pooling arrangement whereby the employer redistributes the tips to the employees upon some basis to which they have mutually agreed among themselves, the amounts received and retained by each individual as his own are counted as his tips for purposes of the Act.

§ 531.55 Examples of amounts not received as tips.

(a) A compulsory charge for service, such as 10 percent of the amount of the bill, imposed on a customer by an employer's establishment, is not a tip and, even if distributed by the employer to his employees, cannot be counted as a tip received in applying the provisions of section 3(m) and 3(t). Similarly, where negotiations between a hotel and a customer for banquet facilities include amounts for distribution to employees of the hotel, the amounts so distributed are not counted as tips received. Likewise, where the employment agreement is such that amounts presented by customers as tips belong to the employer and must be credited or turned over to him, the employee is in effect collecting for his employer additional income from the operations of the latter's establishment. Even though such amounts are not collected by imposition of any compulsory charge on the customer, plainly the employee is not receiving tips within the meaning of section 3(m) and 3(t). The amounts received from customers are the employer's property,

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not his, and do not constitute tip income to the employee.

(b) As stated above, service charges and other similar sums which become part of the employer's gross receipts are not tips for the purposes of the Act. However, where such sums are distributed by the employer to his employees, they may be used in their entirety to satisfy the monetary requirements of the Act. Also, if pursuant to an employment agreement the tips received by an employee must be credited or turned over to the employer, such sums may, after receipt by the employer, be used by the employer to satisfy the monetary requirements of the Act. In such instances, there is no applicability of the 50-percent limitation on tip credits provided by section 3(m).

§ 531.56 "More than \$20 a month in tips."

(a) *In general.* An employee who receives tips, within the meaning of the Act, is a "tipped employee" under the definition in section 3(t) when, in the occupation in which he is engaged, the amounts he receives as tips customarily and regularly total "more than \$20 a month." An employee employed in an occupation in which the tips he receives meet this minimum standard is a "tipped employee" for whom the wage credit provided by section 3(m) may be taken in computing the compensation due him under the Act for employment in such occupation, whether he is employed in it full time or part time. An employee employed full time or part time in an occupation in which he does not receive more than \$20 a month in tips customarily and regularly is not a "tipped employee" within the meaning of the Act and must receive the full compensation required by its provisions in cash or allowable facilities without any deduction for tips received under the provisions of section 3(m).

(b) *Month.* The definition of tipped employee does not require that the calendar month be used in determining whether more than \$20 a month is customarily and regularly received as tips. Any appropriate recurring monthly period beginning on the same day of the calendar month may be used.

(c) *Individual tip receipts are controlling.* An employee must himself customarily and regularly receive more than \$20 a month in tips in order to qualify as a tipped employee. The fact that he is part of a group which has a record of receiving more than \$20 a month in tips will not qualify him. For example, a waitress who is newly hired will not be considered a tipped employee merely because the other waitresses in the establishment receive tips in the requisite amount. For the method of applying the test in initial and terminal months of employment, see § 531.58.

(d) *Significance of minimum monthly tip receipts.* More than \$20 a month in tips customarily and regularly received by the employee is a minimum standard that must be met before any wage credit for tips is determined under section 3(m). It does not govern or limit the determination by the employer or the Secretary of Labor of the appropriate amount (up to 50 percent of the minimum wage) of wage credit under section 3(m) that may be taken for tips.

(e) *Dual jobs.* In some situations an employee is employed in a dual job, as for example, where a maintenance man in a hotel also serves as a waiter. In such a situation the employee, if he customarily and regularly receives at least \$20 a month in tips for his work as a waiter, is a tipped employee only with respect to his employment as a waiter. He is employed in two occupations, and no tip credit can be taken for his hours of employment in his occupation of maintenance man. Such a situation is distinguishable from that of a waitress who spends part of her time cleaning and setting tables, toasting bread, making coffee and occasionally washing dishes or glasses. It is likewise distinguishable from the counterman who also prepares his own short orders or who, as part of a group of countermen, takes a turn as a short order cook for the group. Such related duties in an occupation that is a tipped occupation need not by themselves be directed toward producing tips.

§ 531.57 Receiving the minimum amount "customarily and regularly."

The employee must receive more than \$20 a month in tips "customarily and regularly" in the occupation in which he is engaged in order to qualify as a tipped employee under section 3(t). If it is known that he always receives more than the stipulated amount each month, as may be the case with many employees in occupations such as those of waiters, bellhops, taxicab drivers, barbers, or beauty operators, the employee will qualify and the tip credit provisions of section 3(m) may be applied. On the other hand, an employee who only occasionally or sporadically receives tips totaling more than \$20 a month, such as at Christmas or New Years when customers may be more generous than usual, will not be deemed a tipped employee. The phrase "customarily and regularly" signifies a frequency which must be greater than occasional, but which may be less than constant. If an employee is in an occupation in which he normally and recurrently receives more than \$20 a month in tips, he will be considered a tipped employee even though occasionally because of sickness, vacation, seasonal fluctuations or the like, he fails to receive more than \$20 in tips in a particular month.

§ 531.58 Initial and terminal months.

An exception to the requirement that an employee, whether full-time, part-time, permanent or temporary, will qualify as a tipped employee only if he customarily and regularly receives more than \$20 a month in tips is made in the case of initial and terminal months of employment. In such months the purpose of the provision for tipped employees would seem fulfilled if qualification as a tipped employee is based on his receipt of tips in the particular week or weeks of such month at a rate in excess of \$20 a month, where the employee has worked less than a month because he started or terminated employment during the month.

§ 531.59 The tip wage credit.

In determining compliance with the wage payment requirements of the Act, under the provisions of section 3(m) the