

§ 784.136

GENERAL CHARACTER AND SCOPE OF THE
SECTION 13(A)(4) EXEMPTION

§ 784.136 “Shore” activities exempted under section 13(b)(4).

Section 13(b)(4) provides an exemption from the overtime but not from the minimum wage provisions of the Act for “any employee employed in the canning, processing, marketing, freezing, curing, storing, packing for shipment, or distributing” aquatic forms of animal and vegetable life or any by-products thereof. Originally, all these operations were contained in the exemption provided by section 13(a)(5) but, as a result of amendments, first “canning”, in 1949, and then the other operations in 1961, were transferred to section 13(b)(4). (See the discussion in §§ 784.102 to 784.105.) These activities are “shore” activities and in general have to do with the movement of the perishable aquatic products to a non-perishable state or to points of consumption (S. Rept. 145, 87th Cong., first session, p. 33).

§ 784.137 Relationship of exemption to exemption for “offshore” activities.

The reasons advanced for exemption of employment in “shore” operations, now listed in section 13(b)(4), at the time of the adoption of the original exemption in 1938, had to do with the difficulty of regulating hours of work of those whose operations, like those of fishermen, were stated to be governed by the time, size, availability, and perishability of the catch, all of which were considered to be affected by natural factors that the employer could not control (see 83 Cong. Rec. 7408, 7422, 7443). The intended limited scope of the exemption in this respect was not changed by transfer of the “shore” activities from section 13(a)(5) to section 13(b)(4). The exemption of employment in these “shore” operations may be considered, therefore, as intended to implement and supplement the exemption for employment in “offshore” operations provided by section 13(a)(5), by exempting from the hours provisions of the Act employees employed in those “shore” activities which are necessarily somewhat affected by the same natural factors. These “shore” activities are affected primarily, however, by

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fluctuations in the supply of the product or by the necessity for consumption or preservation of such products before spoilage occurs (see *Fleming v. Hawkeye Pearl Button Co.*, 113 F. 2d 52; cf. *McComb v. Consolidated Fisheries*, 174 F. 2d 74).

§ 784.138 Perishable state of the aquatic product as affecting exemption.

(a) Activities performed after conversion of an aquatic product to a non-perishable state cannot form the basis for application of the section 13(b)(4) exemption unless the subsequent operation is so integrated with the performance of exempt operations on the aquatic forms of animal and vegetable life mentioned in the section that functionally and as a practical matter it must be considered a part of the operations for which exemption was intended. The exemption is, consequently, not available for the handling or shipping of nonperishable products by an employer except where done as a part of named operations commenced on the product when it was in a perishable state. Thus, employees of dealers in or distributors of such nonperishable products as fish oil and fish meal, or canned seafood, are not within the exemption. Similarly, there is no basis for application of the exemption to employees employed in further processing of or manufacturing operations on products previously rendered nonperishable, such as refining fish oil or handling fish meal in connection with the manufacture of feeds. Further specific examples of application of the foregoing principle are given in the subsequent discussion of particular operations named in section 13(b)(4).

(b) In applying the principle stated in paragraph (a) of this section, the Department has not asserted that the exemption is inapplicable to the performance of the operations described in section 13(b)(4) on frozen, smoked, salted, or cured fish. The Department will continue to follow this policy until further clarification from the courts.

§ 784.139 Scope of exempt operations in general.

Exemption under section 13(b)(4), like exemption under section 13(a)(5),

depends upon the employment in the actual activities named in the section, and an employee performing a function which is not necessary to the actual conduct of a named activity, as explained in § 784.106, is not within the exemption. It is also essential to exemption that the operations named in section 13(b)(4) be performed on the forms of aquatic life specified in the section and not on other commodities a substantial part of which consists of materials or products other than the named aquatic products. Application of these principles has been considered generally in the earlier discussion, and further applications will be noted in the following sections and in the subsequent discussion of particular operations mentioned in the section 13(b)(4) exemption.

§ 784.140 Fabrication and handling of supplies for use in named operations.

(a) As noted in § 784.109, the exemption for employees employed "in" the named operations does not extend to an employee by reason of the fact that he engages in fabricating supplies for the named operations. Employment in connection with the furnishing of supplies for the processing or canning operations named in section 13(b)(4) is not exempt as employment "in" such named operations unless the functional relationship of the work to the actual conduct of the named operations is such that, as a practical matter, the employment is directly and necessarily a part of the operations for which exemption is intended. Employees who meet the daily needs of the canning or processing operations by delivering from stock, handling, and working on supplies such as salt, condiments, cleaning supplies, containers, etc., which must be provided as needed if the named operations are to continue, are within the exemption because such work is, in practical effect, a part of the operations for which exemption is intended. On the other hand, the receiving, unloading, and storing of such supplies during seasons when the named operations are not being carried on for subsequent use in the operations expected to be performed during the active season, are ordinarily too re-

mote from the actual conduct of the named operations to come within the exemption (see § 784.113), and are not affected by the natural factors (§ 784.137) which were considered by the Congress to constitute a fundamental reason for providing the exemption. Whether the receiving, unloading, and storing of supplies during periods when the named operations are being carried on are functionally so related to the actual conduct of the operations as to be, in practical effect, a part of the named operations and within the exemption, will depend on all the facts and circumstances of the particular situation and the manner in which the named operations are carried on. Normally where such activities are directed to building up stock for use at a relatively remote time and there is no direct integration with the actual conduct of the named operations, the exemption will not apply.

(b) It may be that employees are engaged in the same workweek in performing exempt and nonexempt work. For example, a shop machinist engaged in making a new part to be used in the repair of a machine currently used in canning operations would be doing exempt work. If he also in the same workweeks makes parts to be used in a manufacturing plant operated by his employer, this work, since it does not directly or necessarily contribute to the conduct of the canning operations, would be nonexempt work causing the loss of the exemption if such work occupied a substantial amount (for enforcement purposes, more than 20 percent) of the employee's worktime in that workweek (see § 784.116 for a more detailed discussion).

§ 784.141 Examples of nonexempt employees.

An employer who engaged in operations specified in section 13(b)(4) which he performs on the marine products and byproducts described in that section may operate a business which engages also in operations of a different character or one in which some of the activities carried on are not functionally necessary to the conduct of operations named in section 13(b)(4). In such a business there will ordinarily