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**Title 29 - Labor**  
**Subtitle B - Regulations Relating to Labor**  
**Chapter V - Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor**  
**Subchapter A - Regulations**

**Part 553** Application of the Fair Labor Standards Act to Employees of State and Local Governments

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## PART 553 - APPLICATION OF THE FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT TO EMPLOYEES OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

**Authority:** Secs. 1-19, 52 Stat. 1060, as amended (29 U.S.C. 201-219); Pub. L. 99-150, 99 Stat. 787 (29 U.S.C. 203, 207, 211). Pub. L. 106-151, 113 Stat. 1731 (29 U.S.C. 203(y)).

**Source:** 52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987, unless otherwise noted.

## Subpart A - General

### INTRODUCTION

#### § 553.1 Definitions.

- (a) **Act or FLSA** means the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended (52 Stat. 1060, as amended; 29 U.S.C. 201-219).
- (b) **1985 Amendments** means the Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1985 (Pub. L. 99-150).
- (c) **Public agency** means a State, a political subdivision of a State or an interstate governmental agency.
- (d) **State** means a State of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, or any other Territory or possession of the United States (29 U.S.C. 203(c) and 213(f)).

#### § 553.2 Purpose and scope.

- (a) The 1985 Amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) changed certain provisions of the Act as they apply to employees of State and local public agencies. The purpose of part 553 is to set forth the regulations to carry out the provisions of these Amendments, as well as other FLSA provisions previously in existence relating to such public agency employees.
- (b) The regulations in this part are divided into three subparts. Subpart A interprets and applies the special FLSA provisions that are generally applicable to all covered and nonexempt employees of State and local governments. Subpart A also contains provisions concerning certain individuals (*i.e.*, elected officials, their appointees, and legislative branch employees) who are excluded from the definition of “employee” and thus from FLSA coverage. This subpart also interprets and applies sections 7(o), and 7(p)(2), 7(p)(3), and 11(c) of the Act regarding compensatory time off, occasional or sporadic part-time employment, and the performance of substitute work by public agency employees, respectively.
- (c) Subpart B of this part deals with “volunteer” services performed by individuals for public agencies. Subpart C applies various FLSA provisions as they relate to fire protection and law enforcement employees of public agencies.

#### § 553.3 Coverage - general.

- (a)
  - (1) In 1966, Congress amended the FLSA to extend coverage to State and local government employees engaged in the operation of hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and mass transit systems.
  - (2) In 1972, the Education Amendments further extended coverage to employees of public preschools.
  - (3) In 1974, the FLSA Amendments extended coverage to virtually all of the remaining State and local government employees who were not covered as a result of the 1966 and 1972 legislation.
- (b) Certain definitions already in the Act were modified by the 1974 Amendments. The definition of the term “employer” was changed to include public agencies and that of “employee” was amended to include individuals employed by public agencies. The definition of “enterprise” contained in section 3(r) of the Act

was modified to provide that activities of a public agency are performed for a “business purpose.” The term “enterprise engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce” defined in section 3(s) of the Act was expanded to include public agencies.

#### SECTION 3(E)(2)(C) - EXCLUSIONS

##### **§ 553.10 General.**

Section 3(e)(2)(C) of the Act excludes from the definition of “employee”, and thus from coverage, certain individuals employed by public agencies. This exclusion applies to elected public officials, their immediate advisors, and certain individuals whom they appoint or select to serve in various capacities. In addition, the 1985 Amendments exclude employees of legislative branches of State and local governments. A condition for exclusion is that the employee must not be subject to the civil service laws of the employing State or local agency.

##### **§ 553.11 Exclusion for elected officials and their appointees.**

- (a) Section 3(e)(2)(C) provides an exclusion from the Act's coverage for officials elected by the voters of their jurisdictions. Also excluded under this provision are personal staff members and officials in policymaking positions who are selected or appointed by the elected public officials and certain advisers to such officials.
- (b) The statutory term “member of personal staff” generally includes only persons who are under the direct supervision of the selecting elected official and have regular contact with such official. The term typically does not include individuals who are directly supervised by someone other than the elected official even though they may have been selected by the official. For example, the term might include the elected official's personal secretary, but would not include the secretary to an assistant.
- (c) In order to qualify as personal staff members or officials in policymaking positions, the individuals in question must not be subject to the civil service laws of their employing agencies. The term “civil service laws” refers to a personnel system established by law which is designed to protect employees from arbitrary action, personal favoritism, and political coercion, and which uses a competitive or merit examination process for selection and placement. Continued tenure of employment of employees under civil service, except for cause, is provided. In addition, such personal staff members must be appointed by, and serve solely at the pleasure or discretion of, the elected official.
- (d) The exclusion for “immediate adviser” to elected officials is limited to staff who serve as advisers on constitutional or legal matters, and who are not subject to the civil service rules of their employing agency.

##### **§ 553.12 Exclusion for employees of legislative branches.**

- (a) Section 3(e)(2)(C) of the Act provides an exclusion from the definition of the term “employee” for individuals who are not subject to the civil service laws of their employing agencies and are employed by legislative branches or bodies of States, their political subdivisions or interstate governmental agencies.
- (b) Employees of State or local legislative libraries do not come within this statutory exclusion. Also, employees of school boards, other than elected officials and their appointees (as discussed in § 553.11), do not come within this exclusion.

#### SECTION 7(O) - COMPENSATORY TIME AND COMPENSATORY TIME OFF

## § 553.20 Introduction.

Section 7 of the FLSA requires that covered, nonexempt employees receive not less than one and one-half times their regular rates of pay for hours worked in excess of the applicable maximum hours standards. However, section 7(o) of the Act provides an element of flexibility to State and local government employers and an element of choice to their employees or the representatives of their employees regarding compensation for statutory overtime hours. The exemption provided by this subsection authorizes a public agency which is a State, a political subdivision of a State, or an interstate governmental agency, to provide compensatory time off (with certain limitations, as provided in § 553.21) in lieu of monetary overtime compensation that would otherwise be required under section 7. Compensatory time received by an employee in lieu of cash must be at the rate of not less than one and one-half hours of compensatory time for each hour of overtime work, just as the monetary rate for overtime is calculated at the rate of not less than one and one-half times the regular rate of pay.

## § 553.21 Statutory provisions.

Section 7(o) provides as follows:

(o)(1) Employees of a public agency which is a State, a political subdivision of a State, or an interstate governmental agency may receive, in accordance with this subsection and in lieu of overtime compensation, compensatory time off at a rate not less than one and one-half hours for each hour of employment for which overtime compensation is required by this section.

(2) A public agency may provide compensatory time under paragraph (1) only -

(A) Pursuant to -

(i) Applicable provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, memorandum of understanding, or any other agreement between the public agency and representatives of such employees; or

(ii) In the case of employees not covered by subclause (i), an agreement or understanding arrived at between the employer and employee before the performance of the work; and

(B) If the employee has not accrued compensatory time in excess of the limit applicable to the employee prescribed by paragraph (3).

In the case of employees described in clause (A)(ii) hired prior to April 15, 1986, the regular practice in effect on April 15, 1986, with respect to compensatory time off for such employees in lieu of the receipt of overtime compensation, shall constitute an agreement or understanding under such clause (A)(ii). Except as provided in the previous sentence, the provision of compensatory time off to such employees for hours worked after April 14, 1986, shall be in accordance with this subsection.

(3)(A) If the work of an employee for which compensatory time may be provided included work in a public safety activity, an emergency response activity, or a seasonal activity, the employee engaged in such work may accrue not more than 480 hours of compensatory time for hours worked after April 15, 1986. If such work was any other work, the employee engaged in such work may accrue not more than 240 hours of compensatory time for hours worked after April 15, 1986. Any such employee who, after April 15, 1986, has accrued 480 or 240 hours, as the case may be, of compensatory time off shall, for additional overtime hours of work, be paid overtime compensation.

(B) If compensation is paid to an employee for accrued compensatory time off, such compensation shall be paid at the regular rate earned by the employee at the time the employee receives such payment.

(4) An employee who has accrued compensatory time off authorized to be provided under paragraph (1) shall, upon termination of employment, be paid for the unused compensatory time at a rate of compensation not less than -

(A) The average regular rate received by such employee during the last 3 years of the employee's employment, or

(B) The final regular rate received by such employee, whichever is higher.

(5) An employee of a public agency which is a State, political subdivision of a State, or an interstate governmental agency -

(A) Who has accrued compensatory time off authorized to be provided under paragraph (1), and

(B) Who has requested the use of such compensatory time, shall be permitted by the employee's employer to use such time within a reasonable period after making the request if the use of the compensatory time does not unduly disrupt the operations of the public agency.

(6) For purposes of this subsection -

(A) The term *overtime compensation* means the compensation required by subsection (a), and

(B) The terms *compensatory time* and *compensatory time off* means hours during which an employee is not working, which are not counted as hours worked during the applicable workweek or other work period for purposes of overtime compensation, and for which the employee is compensated at the employee's regular rate.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987]

### § 553.22 “FLSA compensatory time” and “FLSA compensatory time off”.

- (a) Compensatory time and compensatory time off are interchangeable terms under the FLSA. Compensatory time off is paid time off the job which is earned and accrued by an employee in lieu of immediate cash payment for employment in excess of the statutory hours for which overtime compensation is required by section 7 of the FLSA.
- (b) The Act requires that compensatory time under section 7(o) be earned at a rate not less than one and one-half hours for each hour of employment for which overtime compensation is required by section 7 of the FLSA. Thus, the 480-hour limit on accrued compensatory time represents not more than 320 hours of actual overtime worked, and the 240-hour limit represents not more than 160 hours of actual overtime worked.
- (c) The 480- and 240-hour limits on accrued compensatory time only apply to overtime hours worked after April 15, 1986. Compensatory time which an employee has accrued prior to April 15, 1986, is not subject to the overtime requirements of the FLSA and need not be aggregated with compensatory time accrued after that date.

## § 553.23 Agreement or understanding prior to performance of work.

### (a) *General.*

- (1) As a condition for use of compensatory time in lieu of overtime payment in cash, section 7(o)(2)(A) of the Act requires an agreement or understanding reached prior to the performance of work. This can be accomplished pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement, a memorandum of understanding or any other agreement between the public agency and representatives of the employees. If the employees do not have a representative, compensatory time may be used in lieu of cash overtime compensation only if such an agreement or understanding has been arrived at between the public agency and the individual employee before the performance of work. No agreement or understanding is required with respect to employees hired prior to April 15, 1986, who do not have a representative, if the employer had a regular practice in effect on April 15, 1986, of granting compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay.
- (2) Agreements or understandings may provide that compensatory time off in lieu of overtime payment in cash may be restricted to certain hours of work only. In addition, agreements or understandings may provide for any combination of compensatory time off and overtime payment in cash (e.g., one hour compensatory time credit plus one-half the employee's regular hourly rate of pay in cash for each hour of overtime worked) so long as the premium pay principle of at least "time and one-half" is maintained. The agreement or understanding may include other provisions governing the preservation, use, or cashing out of compensatory time so long as these provisions are consistent with section 7(o) of the Act. To the extent that any provision of an agreement or understanding is in violation of section 7(o) of the Act, the provision is superseded by the requirements of section 7(o).

### (b) *Agreement or understanding between the public agency and a representative of the employees.*

- (1) Where employees have a representative, the agreement or understanding concerning the use of compensatory time must be between the representative and the public agency either through a collective bargaining agreement or through a memorandum of understanding or other type of oral or written agreement. In the absence of a collective bargaining agreement applicable to the employees, the representative need not be a formal or recognized bargaining agent as long as the representative is designated by the employees. Any agreement must be consistent with the provisions of section 7(o) of the Act.
- (2) Section 2(b) of the 1985 Amendments provides that a collective bargaining agreement in effect on April 15, 1986, which permits compensatory time off in lieu of overtime compensation, will remain in effect until the expiration date of the collective bargaining agreement unless otherwise modified. However, the terms and conditions of such agreement under which compensatory time off is provided after April 14, 1986, must not violate the requirements of section 7(o) of the Act and these regulations.

### (c) *Agreement or understanding between the public agency and individual employees.*

- (1) Where employees of a public agency do not have a recognized or otherwise designated representative, the agreement or understanding concerning compensatory time off must be between the public agency and the individual employee and must be reached prior to the performance of work. This agreement or understanding with individual employees need not be in writing, but a record of its existence must be kept. (See § 553.50.) An employer need not adopt the same agreement or understanding with different employees and need not provide compensatory time to all employees. The agreement or understanding to provide compensatory time off in lieu of cash overtime compensation may take the form of an express condition of employment, provided

- (i) the employee knowingly and voluntarily agrees to it as a condition of employment and
  - (ii) the employee is informed that the compensatory time received may be preserved, used or cashed out consistent with the provisions of section 7(o) of the Act. An agreement or understanding may be evidenced by a notice to the employee that compensatory time off will be given in lieu of overtime pay. In such a case, an agreement or understanding would be presumed to exist for purposes of section 7(o) with respect to any employee who fails to express to the employer an unwillingness to accept compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay. However, the employee's decision to accept compensatory time off in lieu of cash overtime payments must be made freely and without coercion or pressure.
- (2) Section 2(a) of the 1985 Amendments provides that in the case of employees who have no representative and were employed prior to April 15, 1986, a public agency that has had a regular practice of awarding compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay is deemed to have reached an agreement or understanding with these employees as of April 15, 1986. A public agency need not secure an agreement or understanding with each employee employed prior to that date. If, however, such a regular practice does not conform to the provisions of section 7(o) of the Act, it must be modified to do so with regard to practices after April 14, 1986. With respect to employees hired after April 14, 1986, the public employer who elects to use compensatory time must follow the guidelines on agreements discussed in paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987]

### § 553.24 “Public safety”, “emergency response”, and “seasonal” activities.

- (a) Section 7(o)(3)(A) of the FLSA provides that an employee of a public agency which is a State, a political subdivision of a State, or an interstate governmental agency, may accumulate not more than 480 hours of compensatory time for FLSA overtime hours which are worked after April 15, 1986, if the employee is engaged in “public safety”, “emergency response”, or “seasonal” activity. Employees whose work includes “seasonal”, “emergency response”, or “public safety” activities, as well as other work, will not be subject to both limits of accrual for compensatory time. If the employee's work regularly involves the activities included in the 480-hour limit, the employee will be covered by that limit. A public agency cannot utilize the higher cap by simple classification or designation of an employee. The work performed is controlling. Assignment of occasional duties within the scope of the higher cap will not entitle the employer to use the higher cap. Employees whose work does not regularly involve “seasonal”, “emergency response”, or “public safety” activities are subject to a 240-hour compensatory time accrual limit for FLSA overtime hours which are worked after April 15, 1986.
- (b) Employees engaged in “public safety”, “emergency response”, or “seasonal” activities, who transfer to positions subject to the 240-hour limit, may carry over to the new position any accrued compensatory time. The employer will not be required to cash out the accrued compensatory time which is in excess of the lower limit. However, the employee must be compensated in cash wages for any subsequent overtime hours worked until the number of accrued hours of compensatory time falls below the 240-hour limit.
- (c) “Public safety activities”: The term “public safety activities” as used in section 7(o)(3)(A) of the Act includes law enforcement, fire fighting or related activities as described in §§ 553.210 (a) and (b) and 553.211 (a)-(c), and (f). An employee whose work regularly involves such activities will qualify for the 480-hour accrual limit. However, the 480-hour accrual limit will not apply to office personnel or other civilian employees who may perform public safety activities only in emergency situations, even if they spend substantially all of their time in a particular week in such activities. For example, a maintenance



worker employed by a public agency who is called upon to perform fire fighting activities during an emergency would remain subject to the 240-hour limit, even if such employee spent an entire week or several weeks in a year performing public safety activities. Certain employees who work in "public safety" activities for purposes of section 7(o)(3)(A) may qualify for the partial overtime exemption in section 7(k) of the Act. (See § 553.201)

(d) "Emergency response activity": The term "emergency response activity" as used in section 7(o)(3)(A) of the Act includes dispatching of emergency vehicles and personnel, rescue work and ambulance services. As is the case with "public safety" and "seasonal" activities, an employee must regularly engage in "emergency response" activities to be covered under the 480-hour limit. A city office worker who may be called upon to perform rescue work in the event of a flood or snowstorm would not be covered under the higher limit, since such emergency response activities are not a regular part of the employee's job. Certain employees who work in "emergency response" activities for purposes of section 7(o)(3)(A) may qualify for the partial overtime exemption in section 7(k) of the Act. (See § 553.215.)

(e)

- (1) "Seasonal activity": The term "seasonal activity" includes work during periods of significantly increased demand, which are of a regular and recurring nature. In determining whether employees are considered engaged in a seasonal activity, the first consideration is whether the activity in which they are engaged is a regular and recurring aspect of the employee's work. The second consideration is whether the projected overtime hours during the period of significantly increased demand are likely to result in the accumulation during such period of more than 240 compensatory time hours (the number available under the lower cap). Such projections will normally be based on the employer's past experience with similar employment situations.
- (2) Seasonal activity is not limited strictly to those operations that are very susceptible to changes in the weather. As an example, employees processing tax returns over an extended period of significantly increased demand whose overtime hours could be expected to result in the accumulation during such period of more than 240 compensatory time hours will typically qualify as engaged in a seasonal activity.
- (3) While parks and recreation activity is primarily seasonal because peak demand is generally experienced in fair weather, mere periods of short but intense activity do not make an employee's job seasonal. For example, clerical employees working increased hours for several weeks on a special project or assigned to an afternoon of shoveling snow off the courthouse steps would not be considered engaged in seasonal activities, since the increased activity would not result in the accumulation during such period of more than 240 compensatory time hours. Further, persons employed in municipal auditoriums, theaters, and sports facilities that are open for specific, limited seasons would be considered engaged in seasonal activities, while those employed in facilities that operate year round generally would not.
- (4) Road crews, while not necessarily seasonal workers, may have significant periods of peak demand, for instance during the snow plowing season or road construction season. The snow plow operator/road crew employee may be able to accrue compensatory time to the higher cap, while other employees of the same department who do not have lengthy periods of peak seasonal demand would remain under the lower cap.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987]

### § 553.25 Conditions for use of compensatory time (“reasonable period”, “unduly disrupt”).

- (a) Section 7(o)(5) of the FLSA provides that any employee of a public agency who has accrued compensatory time and requested use of this compensatory time, shall be permitted to use such time off within a “reasonable period” after making the request, if such use does not “unduly disrupt” the operations of the agency. This provision, however, does not apply to “other compensatory time” (as defined below in § 553.28), including compensatory time accrued for overtime worked prior to April 15, 1986.
- (b) Compensatory time cannot be used as a means to avoid statutory overtime compensation. An employee has the right to use compensatory time earned and must not be coerced to accept more compensatory time than an employer can realistically and in good faith expect to be able to grant within a reasonable period of his or her making a request for use of such time.
- (c) **Reasonable period.**
  - (1) Whether a request to use compensatory time has been granted within a “reasonable period” will be determined by considering the customary work practices within the agency based on the facts and circumstances in each case. Such practices include, but are not limited to (a) the normal schedule of work, (b) anticipated peak workloads based on past experience, (c) emergency requirements for staff and services, and (d) the availability of qualified substitute staff.
  - (2) The use of compensatory time in lieu of cash payment for overtime must be pursuant to some form of agreement or understanding between the employer and the employee (or the representative of the employee) reached prior to the performance of the work. (See § 553.23.) To the extent that the (conditions under which an employee can take compensatory time off are contained in an agreement or understanding as defined in § 553.23, the terms of such agreement or understanding will govern the meaning of “reasonable period”.
- (d) **Unduly disrupt.** When an employer receives a request for compensatory time off, it shall be honored unless to do so would be “unduly disruptive” to the agency’s operations. Mere inconvenience to the employer is an insufficient basis for denial of a request for compensatory time off. (See H. Rep. 99-331, p. 23.) For an agency to turn down a request from an employee for compensatory time off requires that it should reasonably and in good faith anticipate that it would impose an unreasonable burden on the agency’s ability to provide services of acceptable quality and quantity for the public during the time requested without the use of the employee’s services.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987]

### § 553.26 Cash overtime payments.

- (a) Overtime compensation due under section 7 may be paid in cash at the employer's option, in lieu of providing compensatory time off under section 7(o) of the Act in any workweek or work period. The FLSA does not prohibit an employer from freely substituting cash, in whole or part, for compensatory time off; and overtime payment in cash would not affect subsequent granting of compensatory time off in future workweeks or work periods. (See § 553.23(a)(2).)
- (b) The principles for computing cash overtime pay are contained in 29 CFR part 778. Cash overtime compensation must be paid at a rate not less than one and one-half times the regular rate at which the employee is actually paid. (See 29 CFR 778.107.)

- (c) In a workweek or work period during which an employee works hours which are overtime hours under FLSA and for which cash overtime payment will be made, and the employee also takes compensatory time off, the payment for such time off may be excluded from the regular rate of pay under section 7(e)(2) of the Act. Section 7(e)(2) provides that the regular rate shall not be deemed to include

. . . payments made for occasional periods when no work is performed due to vacation, holiday, . . . or other similar cause.

As explained in 29 CFR 778.218(d), the term “other similar cause” refers to payments made for periods of absence due to factors like holidays, vacations, illness, and so forth. Payments made to an employee for periods of absence due to the use of accrued compensatory time are considered to be the type of payments in this “other similar cause” category.

### § 553.27 Payments for unused compensatory time.

- (a) Payments for accrued compensatory time earned after April 14, 1986, may be made at any time and shall be paid at the regular rate earned by the employee at the time the employee receives such payment.
- (b) Upon termination of employment, an employee shall be paid for unused compensatory time earned after April 14, 1986, at a rate of compensation not less than -
  - (1) The average regular rate received by such employee during the last 3 years of the employee's employment, or
  - (2) The final regular rate received by such employee, whichever is higher.
- (c) The phrase *last 3 years of employment* means the 3-year period immediately prior to termination. Where an employee's last 3 years of employment are not continuous because of a break in service, the period of employment after the break in service will be treated as new employment. However, such a break in service must have been intended to be permanent and any accrued compensatory time earned after April 14, 1986, must have been cashed out at the time of initial separation. Where the final period of employment is less than 3 years, the average rate still must be calculated based on the rate(s) in effect during such period.
- (d) The term “regular rate” is defined in 29 CFR 778.108. As indicated in § 778.109, the regular rate is an hourly rate, although the FLSA does not require employers to compensate employees on an hourly basis.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987]

### § 553.28 Other compensatory time.

- (a) Compensatory time which is earned and accrued by an employee for employment in excess of a nonstatutory (that is, non-FLSA) requirement is considered “other” compensatory time. The term “other” compensatory time off means hours during which an employee is not working and which are not counted as hours worked during the period when used. For example, a collective bargaining agreement may provide that compensatory time be granted to employees for hours worked in excess of 8 in a day, or for working on a scheduled day off in a nonovertime workweek. The FLSA does not require compensatory time to be granted in such situations.
- (b) Compensatory time which is earned and accrued by an employee working hours which are “overtime” hours under State or local law, ordinance, or other provisions, but which are not overtime hours under section 7 of the FLSA is also considered “other” compensatory time. For example, a local law or ordinance

may provide that compensatory time be granted to employees for hours worked in excess of 35 in a workweek. Under section 7(a) of the FLSA, only hours worked in excess of 40 in a workweek are overtime hours which must be compensated at one and one-half times the regular rate of pay.

- (c) Similarly, compensatory time earned or accrued by an employee for employment in excess of a standard established by the personnel policy or practice of an employer, or by custom, which does not result from the FLSA provision, is another example of "other" compensatory time.
- (d) The FLSA does not require that the rate at which "other" compensatory time is earned has to be at a rate of one and one-half hours for each hour of employment. The rate at which "other" compensatory time is earned may be some lesser or greater multiple of the rate or the straight-time rate itself.
- (e) The requirements of section 7(o) of the FLSA, including the limitations on accrued compensatory time, do not apply to "other" compensatory time as described above.

#### OTHER EXEMPTIONS

### § 553.30 Occasional or sporadic employment-section 7(p)(2).

- (a) Section 7(p)(2) of the FLSA provides that where State or local government employees, solely at their option, work occasionally or sporadically on a part-time basis for the same public agency in a different capacity from their regular employment, the hours worked in the different jobs shall not be combined for the purpose of determining overtime liability under the Act.
- (b) *Occasional or sporadic.*
  - (1) The term *occasional or sporadic* means infrequent, irregular, or occurring in scattered instances. There may be an occasional need for additional resources in the delivery of certain types of public services which is at times best met by the part-time employment of an individual who is already a public employee. Where employees freely and solely at their own option enter into such activity, the total hours worked will not be combined for purposes of determining any overtime compensation due on the regular, primary job. However, in order to prevent overtime abuse, such hours worked are to be excluded from computing overtime compensation due only where the occasional or sporadic assignments are not within the same general occupational category as the employee's regular work.
  - (2) In order for an employee's occasional or sporadic work on a part-time basis to qualify for exemption under section 7(p)(2), the employee's decision to work in a different capacity must be made freely and without coercion, implicit or explicit, by the employer. An employer may suggest that an employee undertake another kind of work for the same unit of government when the need for assistance arises, but the employee must be free to refuse to perform such work without sanction and without being required to explain or justify the decision.
  - (3) Typically, public recreation and park facilities, and stadiums or auditoriums utilize employees in occasional or sporadic work. Some of these employment activities are the taking of tickets, providing security for special events (e.g., concerts, sports events, and lectures), officiating at youth or other recreation and sports events, or engaging in food or beverage sales at special events, such as a county fair. Employment in such activity may be considered occasional or sporadic for regular employees of State or local government agencies even where the need can be anticipated because it recurs seasonally (e.g., a holiday concert at a city college, a program of scheduled sports events, or assistance by a city payroll clerk in processing returns at tax filing time). An activity does not fail to be occasional merely because it is recurring. In contrast, for example, if a parks department clerk, in addition to his or her regular job, also regularly works additional hours on a part-time basis (e.g.,

every week or every other week) at a public park food and beverage sales center operated by that agency, the additional work does not constitute intermittent and irregular employment and, therefore, the hours worked would be combined in computing any overtime compensation due.

(c) **Different capacity.**

- (1) In order for employment in these occasional or sporadic activities not to be considered subject to the overtime requirements of section 7 of the FLSA, the regular government employment of the individual performing them must also be in a different capacity, *i.e.*, it must not fall within the same general occupational category.
- (2) In general, the Administrator will consider the duties and other factors contained in the definitions of the 3-digit categories of occupations in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (except in the case of public safety employees as discussed below in section (3)), as well as all the facts and circumstances in a particular case, in determining whether employment in a second capacity is substantially different from the regular employment.
- (3) For example, if a public park employee primarily engaged in playground maintenance also from time to time cleans an evening recreation center operated by the same agency, the additional work would be considered hours worked for the same employer and subject to the Act's overtime requirements because it is not in a *different capacity*. This would be the case even though the work was *occasional or sporadic*, and, was not regularly scheduled. Public safety employees taking on any kind of security or safety function within the same local government are never considered to be employed in a *different capacity*.
- (4) However, if a bookkeeper for a municipal park agency or a city mail clerk occasionally referees for an adult evening basketball league sponsored by the city, the hours worked as a referee would be considered to be in a different general occupational category than the primary employment and would not be counted as hours worked for overtime purposes on the regular job. A person regularly employed as a bus driver may assist in crowd control, for example, at an event such as a winter festival, and in doing so, would be deemed to be serving in a different capacity.
- (5) In addition, any activity traditionally associated with teaching (e.g., coaching, career counseling, etc.) will not be considered as employment in a *different capacity*. However, where personnel other than teachers engage in such teaching-related activities, the work will be viewed as employment in a *different capacity*, provided that these activities are performed on an occasional or sporadic basis and all other requirements for this provision are met. For example, a school secretary could substitute as a coach for a basketball team or a maintenance engineer could provide instruction on auto repair on an occasional or sporadic basis.

**§ 553.31 Substitution - section 7(p)(3).**

- (a) Section 7(p)(3) of the FLSA provides that two individuals employed in any occupation by the same public agency may agree, solely at their option and with the approval of the public agency, to substitute for one another during scheduled work hours in performance of work in the same capacity. The hours worked shall be excluded by the employer in the calculation of the hours for which the substituting employee would otherwise be entitled to overtime compensation under the Act. Where one employee substitutes for another, each employee will be credited as if he or she had worked his or her normal work schedule for that shift.

- (b) The provisions of section 7(p)(3) apply only if employees' decisions to substitute for one another are made freely and without coercion, direct or implied. An employer may suggest that an employee substitute or "trade time" with another employee working in the same capacity during regularly scheduled hours, but each employee must be free to refuse to perform such work without sanction and without being required to explain or justify the decision. An employee's decision to substitute will be considered to have been made at his/her sole option when it has been made (i) without fear of reprisal or promise of reward by the employer, and (ii) exclusively for the employee's own convenience.
- (c) A public agency which employs individuals who substitute or "trade time" under this subsection is not required to keep a record of the hours of the substitute work.
- (d) In order to qualify under section 7(p)(3), an agreement between individuals employed by a public agency to substitute for one another at their own option must be approved by the agency. This requires that the agency be aware of the arrangement prior to the work being done, i.e., the employer must know what work is being done, by whom it is being done, and where and when it is being done. Approval is manifest when the employer is aware of the substitution and indicates approval in whatever manner is customary.

### § 553.32 Other FLSA exemptions.

- (a) There are other exemptions from the minimum wage and/or overtime requirements of the FLSA which may apply to certain employees of public agencies. The following sections provide a discussion of some of the major exemptions which may be applicable. This list is not comprehensive.
- (b) Section 7(k) of the Act provides a partial overtime pay exemption for public agency employees employed in fire protection or law enforcement activities (including security personnel in correctional institutions). In addition, section 13(b)(20) provides a complete overtime pay exemption for any employee of a public agency engaged in fire protection or law enforcement activities, if the public agency employs less than five employees in such activities. (See subpart C of this part.)
- (c) Section 13(a)(1) of the Act provides an exemption from both the minimum wage and overtime pay requirements for any employee employed in a bona fide executive, administrative, professional, or outside sales capacity, as these terms are defined and delimited in part 541 of this title. An employee will qualify for exemption if he or she meets all of the pertinent tests relating to duties, responsibilities, and salary.
- (d) Section 7(j) of the Act provides that a hospital or residential care establishment may, pursuant to a prior agreement or understanding with an employee or employees, adopt a fixed work period of 14 consecutive days for the purpose of computing overtime pay in lieu of the regular 7-day workweek. Workers employed under section 7(j) must receive not less than one and one-half times their regular rates of pay for all hours worked over 8 in any workday, and over 80 in the 14-day work period. (See § 778.601 of this title.)
- (e) Section 13(a)(3) of the Act provides a minimum wage and overtime pay exemption for any employee employed by an amusement or recreational establishment if
  - (1) it does not operate for more than 7 months in any calendar year or
  - (2) during the preceding calendar year, its average receipts for any 6 months of such year were not more than  $33\frac{1}{3}$  percent of its average receipts for the other 6 months of such year. In order to meet the requirements of section 13(a)(3)(B), the establishment in the previous year must have received at least 75 percent of its income within 6 months. The 6 months, however, need not be 6 consecutive months. State and local governments operate parks and recreational areas to which this exemption may apply.

- (f) Section 13(b)(1) of the Act provides an exemption from the overtime pay requirements for "Any employee with respect to whom the Secretary of Transportation has power to establish qualifications and maximum hours of service pursuant to the provisions of section 204 of the Motor Carrier Act, 1935." (recodified at section 3102, 49 U.S.C.). With regard to State or local governments, this overtime pay exemption may affect mass transit systems engaged in interstate commerce. This exemption is applicable to drivers, driver's helpers, loaders, and mechanics employed by a common carrier whose activities directly affect the safety of operation of motor vehicles in the transportation on the public highways of passengers or property. (See part 782 of this title.)
- (g) Section 7(n) of the Act provides that, for the purpose of computing overtime pay, the hours of employment of a mass transit employee do not include the time spent in charter activities if
  - (1) pursuant to a prior agreement the time is not to be so counted, and
  - (2) such charter activities are not a part of the employee's regular employment.
- (h) Additional overtime pay exemptions which may apply to employees of public agencies are contained in sections 13(b)(2) (employees of certain common carriers by rail), 13(b)(9) (certain employees of small market radio and television stations), and section 13(b)(12) (employees in agriculture) of the Act. Further, section 13(a)(6) of the Act provides a minimum wage and overtime pay exemption for agricultural employees who work on small farms. (See part 780 of this title.)

#### RECORDKEEPING

### **§ 553.50 Records to be kept of compensatory time.**

For each employee subject to the compensatory time and compensatory time off provisions of section 7(o) of the Act, a public agency which is a State, a political subdivision of a State or an interstate governmental agency shall maintain and preserve records containing the basic information and data required by § 516.2 of this title and, in addition:

- (a) The number of hours of compensatory time earned pursuant to section 7(o) each workweek, or other applicable work period, by each employee at the rate of one and one-half hour for each overtime hour worked;
- (b) The number of hours of such compensatory time used each workweek, or other applicable work period, by each employee;
- (c) The number of hours of compensatory time compensated in cash, the total amount paid and the date of such payment; and
- (d) Any collective bargaining agreement or written understanding or agreement with respect to earning and using compensatory time off. If such agreement or understanding is not in writing, a record of its existence must be kept.

### **§ 553.51 Records to be kept for employees paid pursuant to section 7(k).**

For each employee subject to the partial overtime exemption in section 7(k) of the Act, a public agency which is a State, a political subdivision of a State, or an interstate governmental agency shall maintain and preserve records containing the information and data required by § 553.50 and, in addition, make some notation on the payroll records which shows the work period for each employee and which indicates the length of that period and its

starting time. If all the workers (or groups of workers) have a work period of the same length beginning at the same time on the same day, a single notation of the time of day and beginning day of the work period will suffice for these workers.

## **Subpart B - Volunteers**

### **§ 553.100 General.**

Section 3(e) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended in 1985, provides that individuals performing volunteer services for units of State and local governments will not be regarded as “employees” under the statute. The purpose of this subpart is to define the circumstances under which individuals may perform hours of volunteer service for units of State and local governments without being considered to be their employees during such hours for purposes of the FLSA.

### **§ 553.101 “Volunteer” defined.**

- (a) An individual who performs hours of service for a public agency for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered, is considered to be a volunteer during such hours. Individuals performing hours of service for such a public agency will be considered volunteers for the time so spent and not subject to sections 6, 7, and 11 of the FLSA when such hours of service are performed in accord with sections 3(e)(4) (A) and (B) of the FLSA and the guidelines in this subpart.
- (b) Congress did not intend to discourage or impede volunteer activities undertaken for civic, charitable, or humanitarian purposes, but expressed its wish to prevent any manipulation or abuse of minimum wage or overtime requirements through coercion or undue pressure upon individuals to “volunteer” their services.
- (c) Individuals shall be considered volunteers only where their services are offered freely and without pressure or coercion, direct or implied, from an employer.
- (d) An individual shall not be considered a volunteer if the individual is otherwise employed by the same public agency to perform the same type of services as those for which the individual proposes to volunteer.

### **§ 553.102 Employment by the same public agency.**

- (a) Section 3(e)(4)(A)(ii) of the FLSA does not permit an individual to perform hours of volunteer service for a public agency when such hours involve the same type of services which the individual is employed to perform for the same public agency.
- (b) Whether two agencies of the same State or local government constitute the same public agency can only be determined on a case-by-case basis. One factor that would support a conclusion that two agencies are separate is whether they are treated separately for statistical purposes in the Census of Governments issued by the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

### **§ 553.103 “Same type of services” defined.**

- (a) The 1985 Amendments provide that employees may volunteer hours of service to their public employer or agency provided “such services are not the same type of services which the individual is employed to perform for such public agency.” Employees may volunteer their services in one capacity or another without contemplation of pay for services rendered. The phrase “same type of services” means similar or identical services. In general, the Administrator will consider, but not as the only criteria, the duties and other factors contained in the definitions of the 3-digit categories of occupations in the *Dictionary of*



*Occupational Titles* in determining whether the volunteer activities constitute the “same type of services” as the employment activities. Equally important in such a determination will be the consideration of all the facts and circumstances in a particular case, including whether the volunteer service is closely related to the actual duties performed by or responsibilities assigned to the employee.

- (b) An example of an individual performing services which constitute the “same type of services” is a nurse employed by a State hospital who proposes to volunteer to perform nursing services at a State-operated health clinic which does not qualify as a separate public agency as discussed in § 553.102. Similarly, a firefighter cannot volunteer as a firefighter for the same public agency.
- (c) Examples of volunteer services which do not constitute the “same type of services” include: A city police officer who volunteers as a part-time referee in a basketball league sponsored by the city; an employee of the city parks department who serves as a volunteer city firefighter; and an office employee of a city hospital or other health care institution who volunteers to spend time with a disabled or elderly person in the same institution during off duty hours as an act of charity.

### **§ 553.104 Private individuals who volunteer services to public agencies.**

- (a) Individuals who are not employed in any capacity by State or local government agencies often donate hours of service to a public agency for civic or humanitarian reasons. Such individuals are considered volunteers and not employees of such public agencies if their hours of service are provided with no promise expectation, or receipt of compensation for the services rendered, except for reimbursement for expenses, reasonable benefits, and nominal fees, or a combination thereof, as discussed in § 553.106. There are no limitations or restrictions imposed by the FLSA on the types of services which private individuals may volunteer to perform for public agencies.
- (b) Examples of services which might be performed on a volunteer basis when so motivated include helping out in a sheltered workshop or providing personal services to the sick or the elderly in hospitals or nursing homes; assisting in a school library or cafeteria; or driving a school bus to carry a football team or band on a trip. Similarly, individuals may volunteer as firefighters or auxiliary police, or volunteer to perform such tasks as working with retarded or handicapped children or disadvantaged youth, helping in youth programs as camp counselors, soliciting contributions or participating in civic or charitable benefit programs and volunteering other services needed to carry out charitable or educational programs.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987]

### **§ 553.105 Mutual aid agreements.**

An agreement between two or more States, political subdivisions, or interstate governmental agencies for mutual aid does not change the otherwise volunteer character of services performed by employees of such agencies pursuant to said agreement. For example, where Town A and Town B have entered into a mutual aid agreement related to fire protection, a firefighter employed by Town A who also is a volunteer firefighter for Town B will not have his or her hours of volunteer service for Town B counted as part of his or her hours of employment with Town A. The mere fact that services volunteered to Town B may in some instances involve performance in Town A's geographic jurisdiction does not require that the volunteer's hours are to be counted as hours of employment with Town A.

### **§ 553.106 Payment of expenses, benefits, or fees.**

- (a) Volunteers may be paid expenses, reasonable benefits, a nominal fee, or any combination thereof, for their service without losing their status as volunteers.

- (b) An individual who performs hours of service as a volunteer for a public agency may receive payment for expenses without being deemed an employee for purposes of the FLSA. A school guard does not become an employee because he or she receives a uniform allowance, or reimbursement for reasonable cleaning expenses or for wear and tear on personal clothing worn while performing hours of volunteer service. (A uniform allowance must be reasonably limited to relieving the volunteer of the cost of providing or maintaining a required uniform from personal resources.) Such individuals would not lose their volunteer status because they are reimbursed for the approximate out-of-pocket expenses incurred incidental to providing volunteer services, for example, payment for the cost of meals and transportation expenses.
- (c) Individuals do not lose their status as volunteers because they are reimbursed for tuition, transportation and meal costs involved in their attending classes intended to teach them to perform efficiently the services they provide or will provide as volunteers. Likewise, the volunteer status of such individuals is not lost if they are provided books, supplies, or other materials essential to their volunteer training or reimbursement for the cost thereof.
- (d) Individuals do not lose their volunteer status if they are provided reasonable benefits by a public agency for whom they perform volunteer services. Benefits would be considered reasonable, for example, when they involve inclusion of individual volunteers in group insurance plans (such as liability, health, life, disability, workers' compensation) or pension plans or "length of service" awards, commonly or traditionally provided to volunteers of State and local government agencies, which meet the additional test in paragraph (f) of this section.
- (e) Individuals do not lose their volunteer status if they receive a nominal fee from a public agency. A nominal fee is not a substitute for compensation and must not be tied to productivity. However, this does not preclude the payment of a nominal amount on a "per call" or similar basis to volunteer firefighters. The following factors will be among those examined in determining whether a given amount is nominal: The distance traveled and the time and effort expended by the volunteer; whether the volunteer has agreed to be available around-the-clock or only during certain specified time periods; and whether the volunteer provides services as needed or throughout the year. An individual who volunteers to provide periodic services on a year-round basis may receive a nominal monthly or annual stipend or fee without losing volunteer status.
- (f) Whether the furnishing of expenses, benefits, or fees would result in individuals' losing their status as volunteers under the FLSA can only be determined by examining the total amount of payments made (expenses, benefits, fees) in the context of the economic realities of the particular situation.

## Subpart C - Fire Protection and Law Enforcement Employees of Public Agencies

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

#### § 553.200 Statutory provisions: section 13(b)(20).

- (a) Section 13(b)(20) of the FLSA provides a complete overtime pay exemption for "any employee of a public agency who in any workweek is employed in fire protection activities or any employee of a public agency who in any workweek is employed in law enforcement activities (including security personnel in correctional institutions), if the public agency employs during the workweek less than 5 employees in fire protection or law enforcement activities, as the case may be."

- (b) In determining whether a public agency qualifies for the section 13(b)(20) exemption, the fire protection and law enforcement activities are considered separately. Thus, if a public agency employs less than five employees in fire protection activities, but five or more employees in law enforcement activities (including security personnel in a correctional institution), it may claim the exemption for the fire protection employees but not for the law enforcement employees. No distinction is made between full-time and part-time employees, or between employees on duty and employees on leave status, and all such categories must be counted in determining whether the exemption applies. Individuals who are not considered "employees" for purposes of the FLSA by virtue of section 3(e) of the Act (including persons who are "volunteers" within the meaning of § 553.101, and "elected officials and their appointees" within the meaning of § 553.11) are not counted in determining whether the section 13(b)(20) exemption applies.
- (c) The section 13(b)(20) exemption applies on a workweek basis. It is therefore possible that employees may be subject to maximum hours standard in certain workweeks, but not in others. In those workweeks in which the section 13(b)(20) exemption does not apply, the public agency is entitled to utilize the section 7(k) exemption which is explained below in § 553.201.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987]

### § 553.201 Statutory provisions: section 7(k).

- (a) Section 7(k) of the Act provides a partial overtime pay exemption for fire protection and law enforcement personnel (including security personnel in correctional institutions) who are employed by public agencies on a work period basis. This section of the Act formerly permitted public agencies to pay overtime compensation to such employees in work periods of 28 consecutive days only after 216 hours of work. As further set forth in § 553.230 of this part, the 216-hour standard has been replaced, pursuant to the study mandated by the statute, by 212 hours for fire protection employees and 171 hours for law enforcement employees. In the case of such employees who have a work period of at least 7 but less than 28 consecutive days, overtime compensation is required when the ratio of the number of hours worked to the number of days in the work period exceeds the ratio of 212 (or 171) hours to 28 days.
- (b) As specified in §§ 553.20 through 553.28 of subpart A, workers employed under section 7(k) may, under certain conditions, be compensated for overtime hours worked with compensatory time off rather than immediate overtime premium pay.

### § 553.202 Limitations.

The application of sections 13(b)(20) and 7(k), by their terms, is limited to public agencies, and does not apply to any private organization engaged in furnishing fire protection or law enforcement services. This is so even if the services are provided under contract with a public agency.

#### EXEMPTION REQUIREMENTS

### § 553.210 Fire protection activities.

- (a) As used in sections 7(k) and 13(b)(20) of the Act, the term "any employee \* \* \* in fire protection activities" refers to "an employee, including a firefighter, paramedic, emergency medical technician, rescue worker, ambulance personnel, or hazardous materials worker, who -
  - (1) is trained in fire suppression, has the legal authority and responsibility to engage in fire suppression, and is employed by a fire department of a municipality, county, fire district, or State; and

- (2) is engaged in the prevention, control, and extinguishment of fires or response to emergency situations where life, property, or the environment is at risk.”
- (b) Not included in the term “employee in fire protection activities” are the so-called “civilian” employees of a fire department, fire district, or forestry service who engage in such support activities as those performed by dispatchers, alarm operators, apparatus and equipment repair and maintenance workers, camp cooks, clerks, stenographers, etc.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987, as amended at 76 FR 18856, Apr. 5, 2011]

### § 553.211 Law enforcement activities.

- (a) As used in sections 7(k) and 13(b)(20) of the Act, the term “any employee . . . in law enforcement activities” refers to any employee
  - (1) who is a uniformed or plainclothed member of a body of officers and subordinates who are empowered by State statute or local ordinance to enforce laws designed to maintain public peace and order and to protect both life and property from accidental or willful injury, and to prevent and detect crimes,
  - (2) who has the power to arrest, and
  - (3) who is presently undergoing or has undergone or will undergo on-the-job training and/or a course of instruction and study which typically includes physical training, self-defense, firearm proficiency, criminal and civil law principles, investigative and law enforcement techniques, community relations, medical aid and ethics.
- (b) Employees who meet these tests are considered to be engaged in law enforcement activities regardless of their rank, or of their status as “trainee,” “probationary,” or “permanent,” and regardless of their assignment to duties incidental to the performance of their law enforcement activities such as equipment maintenance, and lecturing, or to support activities of the type described in paragraph (g) of this section, whether or not such assignment is for training or familiarization purposes, or for reasons of illness, injury or infirmity. The term would also include rescue and ambulance service personnel if such personnel form an integral part of the public agency's law enforcement activities. See § 553.215.
- (c) Typically, employees engaged in law enforcement activities include city police; district or local police, sheriffs, under sheriffs or deputy sheriffs who are regularly employed and paid as such; court marshals or deputy marshals; constables and deputy constables who are regularly employed and paid as such; border control agents; state troopers and highway patrol officers. Other agency employees not specifically mentioned may, depending upon the particular facts and pertinent statutory provisions in that jurisdiction, meet the three tests described above. If so, they will also qualify as law enforcement officers. Such employees might include, for example, fish and game wardens or criminal investigative agents assigned to the office of a district attorney, an attorney general, a solicitor general or any other law enforcement agency concerned with keeping public peace and order and protecting life and property.
- (d) Some of the law enforcement officers listed above, including but not limited to certain sheriffs, will not be covered by the Act if they are elected officials and if they are not subject to the civil service laws of their particular State or local jurisdiction. Section 3(e)(2)(C) of the Act excludes from its definition of “employee” elected officials and their personal staff under the conditions therein prescribed. 29 U.S.C. 203(e)(2)(C), and see § 553.11. Such individuals, therefore, need not be counted in determining whether the public agency in question has less than five employees engaged in law enforcement activities for purposes of claiming the section 13(b)(20) exemption.

- (e) Employees who do not meet each of the three tests described above are not engaged in “law enforcement activities” as that term is used in sections 7(k) and 13(b)(20). Employees who normally would not meet each of these tests include
- (1) Building inspectors (other than those defined in § 553.213(a)),
  - (2) Health inspectors,
  - (3) Animal control personnel,
  - (4) Sanitarians,
  - (5) civilian traffic employees who direct vehicular and pedestrian traffic at specified intersections or other control points,
  - (6) Civilian parking checkers who patrol assigned areas for the purpose of discovering parking violations and issuing appropriate warnings or appearance notices,
  - (7) Wage and hour compliance officers,
  - (8) Equal employment opportunity compliance officers,
  - (9) Tax compliance officers,
  - (10) Coal mining inspectors, and
  - (11) Building guards whose primary duty is to protect the lives and property of persons within the limited area of the building.
- (f) The term “any employee in law enforcement activities” also includes, by express reference, “security personnel in correctional institutions.” A correctional institution is any government facility maintained as part of a penal system for the incarceration or detention of persons suspected or convicted of having breached the peace or committed some other crime. Typically, such facilities include penitentiaries, prisons, prison farms, county, city and village jails, precinct house lockups and reformatories. Employees of correctional institutions who qualify as security personnel for purposes of the section 7(k) exemption are those who have responsibility for controlling and maintaining custody of inmates and of safeguarding them from other inmates or for supervising such functions, regardless of whether their duties are performed inside the correctional institution or outside the institution (as in the case of road gangs). These employees are considered to be engaged in law enforcement activities regardless of their rank (e.g., warden, assistant warden or guard) or of their status as “trainee,” “probationary,” or “permanent,” and regardless of their assignment to duties incidental to the performance of their law enforcement activities, or to support activities of the type described in paragraph (g) of this section, whether or not such assignment is for training or familiarization purposes or for reasons of illness, injury or infirmity.
- (g) Not included in the term “employee in law enforcement activities” are the so-called “civilian” employees of law enforcement agencies or correctional institutions who engage in such support activities as those performed by dispatcher, radio operators, apparatus and equipment maintenance and repair workers, janitors, clerks and stenographers. Nor does the term include employees in correctional institutions who engage in building repair and maintenance, culinary services, teaching, or in psychological, medical and paramedical services. This is so even though such employees may, when assigned to correctional institutions, come into regular contact with the inmates in the performance of their duties.

### § 553.212 Twenty percent limitation on nonexempt work.

- (a) Employees engaged in law enforcement activities as described in § 553.211 may also engage in some nonexempt work which is not performed as an incident to or in conjunction with their law enforcement activities. The performance of such nonexempt work will not defeat either the section 13(b)(20) or 7(k) exemptions unless it exceeds 20 percent of the total hours worked by that employee during the workweek or applicable work period. A person who spends more than 20 percent of his/her working time in nonexempt activities is not considered to be an employee engaged in law enforcement activities for purposes of this part.
- (b) Public agency fire protection and law enforcement personnel may, at their own option, undertake employment for the same employer on an occasional or sporadic and part-time basis in a different capacity from their regular employment. (See § 553.30.) The performance of such work does not affect the application of the section 13(b)(20) or 7(k) exemptions with respect to the regular employment. In addition, the hours of work in the different capacity need not be counted as hours worked for overtime purposes on the regular job, nor are such hours counted in determining the 20 percent tolerance for nonexempt work for law enforcement personnel discussed in paragraph (a) of this section.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987, as amended at 76 FR 18856, Apr. 5, 2011]

### § 553.213 Public agency employees engaged in both fire protection and law enforcement activities.

- (a) Some public agencies have employees (often called “public safety officers”) who engage in both fire protection and law enforcement activities, depending on the agency needs at the time. This dual assignment would not defeat either the section 13(b)(20) or 7(k) exemption, provided that each of the activities performed meets the appropriate tests set forth in §§ 553.210 and 553.211. This is so regardless of how the employee's time is divided between the two activities. However, all time spent in nonexempt activities by public safety officers within the work period, whether performed in connection with fire protection or law enforcement functions, or with neither, must be combined for purposes of the 20 percent limitation on nonexempt work discussed in § 553.212.
- (b) As specified in § 553.230, the maximum hours standards under section 7(k) are different for employees engaged in fire protection and for employees engaged in law enforcement. For those employees who perform both fire protection and law enforcement activities, the applicable standard is the one which applies to the activity in which the employee spends the majority of work time during the work period.

### § 553.214 Trainees.

The attendance at a bona fide fire or police academy or other training facility, when required by the employing agency, constitutes engagement in activities under section 7(k) only when the employee meets all the applicable tests described in § 553.210 or § 553.211 (except for the power of arrest for law enforcement personnel), as the case may be. If the applicable tests are met, then basic training or advanced training is considered incidental to, and part of, the employee's fire protection or law enforcement activities.

### § 553.215 [Reserved]

## § 553.216 Other exemptions.

Although the 1974 Amendments to the FLSA provided special exemptions for employees of public agencies engaged in fire protection and law enforcement activities, such workers may also be subject to other exemptions in the Act, and public agencies may claim such other applicable exemptions in lieu of sections 13(b)(20) and 7(k). For example, section 13(a)(1) provides a complete minimum wage and overtime pay exemption for any employee employed in a bona fide executive, administrative, or professional capacity, as those terms are defined and delimited in 29 CFR part 541. The section 13(a)(1) exemption can be claimed for any fire protection or law enforcement employee who meets all of the tests specified in part 541 relating to duties, responsibilities, and salary. Thus, high ranking police officials who are engaged in law enforcement activities, may also, depending on the facts, qualify for the section 13(a)(1) exemption as “executive” employees. Similarly, certain criminal investigative agents may qualify as “administrative” employees under section 13(a)(1). However, the election to take the section 13(a)(1) exemption for an employee who qualifies for it will not result in excluding that employee from the count that must be made to determine the application of the section 13(b)(20) exemption to the agency's other employees.

### TOUR OF DUTY AND COMPENSABLE HOURS OF WORK RULES

## § 553.220 “Tour of duty” defined.

- (a) The term “tour of duty” is a unique concept applicable only to employees for whom the section 7(k) exemption is claimed. This term, as used in section 7(k), means the period of time during which an employee is considered to be on duty for purposes of determining compensable hours. It may be a scheduled or unscheduled period. Such periods include “shifts” assigned to employees often days in advance of the performance of the work. Scheduled periods also include time spent in work outside the “shift” which the public agency employer assigns. For example, a police officer may be assigned to crowd control during a parade or other special event outside of his or her shift.
- (b) Unscheduled periods include time spent in court by police officers, time spent handling emergency situations, and time spent working after a shift to complete an assignment. Such time must be included in the compensable tour of duty even though the specific work performed may not have been assigned in advance.
- (c) The tour of duty does not include time spent working for a separate and independent employer in certain types of special details as provided in § 553.227. The tour of duty does not include time spent working on an occasional or sporadic and part-time basis in a different capacity from the regular work as provided in § 553.30. The tour of duty does not include time spent substituting for other employees by mutual agreement as specified in § 553.31.
- (d) The tour of duty does not include time spent in volunteer firefighting or law enforcement activities performed for a different jurisdiction, even where such activities take place under the terms of a mutual aid agreement in the jurisdiction in which the employee is employed. (See § 553.105.)

## § 553.221 Compensable hours of work.

- (a) The general rules on compensable hours of work are set forth in 29 CFR part 785 which is applicable to employees for whom the section 7(k) exemption is claimed. Special rules for sleep time (§ 553.222) apply to both law enforcement and employees in fire protection activities for whom the section 7(k) exemption is claimed. Also, special rules for meal time apply in the case of employees in fire protection activities (§ 553.223). Part 785 does not discuss the special provisions that apply to State and local government

workers with respect to the treatment of substitution, special details for a separate and independent employer, early relief, and work performed on an occasional or sporadic and part-time basis, all of which are covered in this subpart.

- (b) Compensable hours of work generally include all of the time during which an employee is on duty on the employer's premises or at a prescribed workplace, as well as all other time during which the employee is suffered or permitted to work for the employer. Such time includes all pre-shift and post-shift activities which are an integral part of the employee's principal activity or which are closely related to the performance of the principal activity, such as attending roll call, writing up and completing tickets or reports, and washing and re-racking fire hoses.
- (c) Time spent away from the employer's premises under conditions that are so circumscribed that they restrict the employee from effectively using the time for personal pursuits also constitutes compensable hours of work. For example, where a police station must be evacuated because of an electrical failure and the employees are expected to remain in the vicinity and return to work after the emergency has passed, the entire time spent away from the premises is compensable. The employees in this example cannot use the time for their personal pursuits.
- (d) An employee who is not required to remain on the employer's premises but is merely required to leave work at home or with company officials where he or she may be reached is not working while on call. Time spent at home on call may or may not be compensable depending on whether the restrictions placed on the employee preclude using the time for personal pursuits. Where, for example, an employee in fire protection activities has returned home after the shift, with the understanding that he or she is expected to return to work in the event of an emergency in the night, such time spent at home is normally not compensable. On the other hand, where the conditions placed on the employee's activities are so restrictive that the employee cannot use the time effectively for personal pursuits, such time spent on call is compensable.
- (e) Normal home to work travel is not compensable, even where the employee is expected to report to work at a location away from the location of the employer's premises.
- (f) A police officer, who has completed his or her tour of duty and who is given a patrol car to drive home and use on personal business, is not working during the travel time even where the radio must be left on so that the officer can respond to emergency calls. Of course, the time spent in responding to such calls is compensable.
- (g) The fact that employees cannot return home after work does not necessarily mean that they continue on duty after their shift. For example, employees in fire protection activities working on a forest fire may be transported to a camp after their shift in order to rest and eat a meal. As a practical matter, the employee in fire protection activities may be precluded from going to their homes because of the distance of the fire from their residences.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987, as amended at 76 FR 18857, Apr. 5, 2011; 82 FR 2229, Jan. 9, 2017]

### § 553.222 Sleep time.

- (a) Where a public employer elects to pay overtime compensation to employees in fire protection activities and/or law enforcement personnel in accordance with section 7(a)(1) of the Act, the public agency may exclude sleep time from hours worked if all the conditions in § 785.22 of this title are met.
- (b) Where the employer has elected to use the section 7(k) exemption, sleep time cannot be excluded from the compensable hours of work where



- (1) The employee is on a tour of duty of less than 24 hours, which is the general rule applicable to all employees under § 785.21, and
  - (2) Where the employee is on a tour of duty of exactly 24 hours, which is a departure from the general rules in part 785.
- (c) Sleep time can be excluded from compensable hours of work, however, in the case of police officers or employees in fire protection activities who are on a tour of duty of more than 24 hours, but only if there is an expressed or implied agreement between the employer and the employees to exclude such time. In the absence of such an agreement, the sleep time is compensable. In no event shall the time excluded as sleep time exceed 8 hours in a 24-hour period. If the sleep time is interrupted by a call to duty, the interruption must be counted as hours worked. If the sleep period is interrupted to such an extent that the employee cannot get a reasonable night's sleep (which, for enforcement purposes means at least 5 hours), the entire time must be counted as hours of work.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987, as amended at 76 FR 18857, Apr. 5, 2011]

### § 553.223 Meal time.

- (a) If a public agency elects to pay overtime compensation to employees in fire protection activities and law enforcement personnel in accordance with section 7(a)(1) of the Act, the public agency may exclude meal time from hours worked if all the tests in § 785.19 of this title are met.
- (b) If a public agency elects to use the section 7(k) exemption, the public agency may, in the case of law enforcement personnel, exclude meal time from hours worked on tours of duty of 24 hours or less, provided that the employee is completely relieved from duty during the meal period, and all the other tests in § 785.19 of this title are met. On the other hand, where law enforcement personnel are required to remain on call in barracks or similar quarters, or are engaged in extended surveillance activities (e.g., "stakeouts"), they are not considered to be completely relieved from duty, and any such meal periods would be compensable.
- (c) With respect to employees in fire protection activities employed under section 7(k), who are confined to a duty station, the legislative history of the Act indicates Congressional intent to mandate a departure from the usual FLSA "hours of work" rules and adoption of an overtime standard keyed to the unique concept of "tour of duty" under which employees in fire protection activities are employed. Where the public agency elects to use the section 7(k) exemption for employees in fire protection activities, meal time cannot be excluded from the compensable hours of work where
  - (1) the employee in fire protection activities is on a tour of duty of less than 24 hours, and
  - (2) where the employee in fire protection activities is on a tour of duty of exactly 24 hours, which is a departure from the general rules in § 785.22 of this title.
- (d) In the case of police officers or employees in fire protection activities who are on a tour of duty of more than 24 hours, meal time may be excluded from compensable hours of work provided that the tests in §§ 785.19 and 785.22 of this title are met.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987, as amended at 76 FR 18857, Apr. 5, 2011]

### § 553.224 “Work period” defined.

- (a) As used in section 7(k), the term “work period” refers to any established and regularly recurring period of work which, under the terms of the Act and legislative history, cannot be less than 7 consecutive days nor more than 28 consecutive days. Except for this limitation, the work period can be of any length, and it need not coincide with the duty cycle or pay period or with a particular day of the week or hour of the day. Once the beginning and ending time of an employee's work period is established, however, it remains fixed regardless of how many hours are worked within the period. The beginning and ending of the work period may be changed, provided that the change is intended to be permanent and is not designed to evade the overtime compensation requirements of the Act.
- (b) An employer may have one work period applicable to all employees, or different work periods for different employees or groups of employees.

### § 553.225 Early relief.

It is a common practice among employees engaged in fire protection activities to relieve employees on the previous shift prior to the scheduled starting time. Such early relief time may occur pursuant to employee agreement, either expressed or implied. This practice will not have the effect of increasing the number of compensable hours of work for employees employed under section 7(k) where it is voluntary on the part of the employees and does not result, over a period of time, in their failure to receive proper compensation for all hours actually worked. On the other hand, if the practice is required by the employer, the time involved must be added to the employee's tour of duty and treated as compensable hours of work.

### § 553.226 Training time.

- (a) The general rules for determining the compensability of training time under the FLSA are set forth in §§ 785.27 through 785.32 of this title.
- (b) While time spent in attending training required by an employer is normally considered compensable hours of work, following are situations where time spent by employees of State and local governments in required training is considered to be noncompensable:
  - (1) Attendance outside of regular working hours at specialized or follow-up training, which is required by law for certification of public and private sector employees within a particular governmental jurisdiction (e.g., certification of public and private emergency rescue workers), does not constitute compensable hours of work for public employees within that jurisdiction and subordinate jurisdictions.
  - (2) Attendance outside of regular working hours at specialized or follow-up training, which is required for certification of employees of a governmental jurisdiction by law of a higher level of government (e.g., where a State or county law imposes a training obligation on city employees), does not constitute compensable hours of work.
  - (3) Time spent in the training described in paragraphs (b) (1) or (2) of this section is not compensable, even if all or part of the costs of the training is borne by the employer.
- (c) Police officers or employees in fire protection activities, who are in attendance at a police or fire academy or other training facility, are not considered to be on duty during those times when they are not in class or at a training session, if they are free to use such time for personal pursuits. Such free time is not compensable.

## § 553.227 Outside employment.

- (a) Section 7(p)(1) makes special provision for fire protection and law enforcement employees of public agencies who, at their own option, perform special duty work in fire protection, law enforcement or related activities for a separate and independent employer (public or private) during their off-duty hours. The hours of work for the separate and independent employer are not combined with the hours worked for the primary public agency employer for purposes of overtime compensation.
- (b) Section 7(p)(1) applies to such outside employment provided
  - (1) The special detail work is performed solely at the employee's option, and
  - (2) the two employers are in fact separate and independent.
- (c) Whether two employers are, in fact, separate and independent can only be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- (d) The primary employer may facilitate the employment or affect the conditions of employment of such employees. For example, a police department may maintain a roster of officers who wish to perform such work. The department may also select the officers for special details from a list of those wishing to participate, negotiate their pay, and retain a fee for administrative expenses. The department may require that the separate and independent employer pay the fee for such services directly to the department, and establish procedures for the officers to receive their pay for the special details through the agency's payroll system. Finally, the department may require that the officers observe their normal standards of conduct during such details and take disciplinary action against those who fail to do so.
- (e) Section 7(p)(1) applies to special details even where a State law or local ordinance requires that such work be performed and that only law enforcement or fire protection employees of a public agency in the same jurisdiction perform the work. For example, a city ordinance may require the presence of city police officers at a convention center during concerts or sports events. If the officers perform such work at their own option, the hours of work need not be combined with the hours of work for their primary employer in computing overtime compensation.
- (f) The principles in paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section with respect to special details of public agency fire protection and law enforcement employees under section 7(p)(1) are exceptions to the usual rules on joint employment set forth in part 791 of this title.
- (g) Where an employee is directed by the public agency to perform work for a second employer, section 7(p)(1) does not apply. Thus, assignments of police officers outside of their normal work hours to perform crowd control at a parade, where the assignments are not solely at the option of the officers, would not qualify as special details subject to this exception. This would be true even if the parade organizers reimburse the public agency for providing such services.
- (h) Section 7(p)(1) does not prevent a public agency from prohibiting or restricting outside employment by its employees.

### OVERTIME COMPENSATION RULES

**§ 553.230 Maximum hours standards for work periods of 7 to 28 days - section 7(k).**

- (a) For those employees engaged in fire protection activities who have a work period of at least 7 but less than 28 consecutive days, no overtime compensation is required under section 7(k) until the number of hours worked exceeds the number of hours which bears the same relationship to 212 as the number of days in the work period bears to 28.
- (b) For those employees engaged in law enforcement activities (including security personnel in correctional institutions) who have a work period of at least 7 but less than 28 consecutive days, no overtime compensation is required under section 7(k) until the number of hours worked exceeds the number of hours which bears the same relationship to 171 as the number of days in the work period bears to 28.
- (c) The ratio of 212 hours to 28 days for employees engaged in fire protection activities is 7.57 hours per day (rounded) and the ratio of 171 hours to 28 days for employees engaged in law enforcement activities is 6.11 hours per day (rounded). Accordingly, overtime compensation (in premium pay or compensatory time) is required for all hours worked in excess of the following maximum hours standards (rounded to the nearest whole hour):

Work period (days)	Maximum hours standards	
	Fire protection	Law enforcement
28	212	171
27	204	165
26	197	159
25	189	153
24	182	147
23	174	141
22	167	134
21	159	128
20	151	122
19	144	116
18	136	110
17	129	104
16	121	98
15	114	92
14	106	86
13	98	79
12	91	73
11	83	67
10	76	61
9	68	55
8	61	49
7	53	43

### § 553.231 Compensatory time off.

- (a) Law enforcement and fire protection employees who are subject to the section 7(k) exemption may receive compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay for hours worked in excess of the maximum for their work period as set forth in § 553.230. The rules for compensatory time off are set forth in §§ 553.20 through 553.28 of this part.
- (b) Section 7(k) permits public agencies to balance the hours of work over an entire work period for law enforcement and fire protection employees. For example, if an employee engaged in fire protection activities' work period is 28 consecutive days, and he or she works 80 hours in each of the first two weeks, but only 52 hours in the third week, and does not work in the fourth week, no overtime compensation (in cash wages or compensatory time) would be required since the total hours worked do not exceed 212 for the work period. If the same employee in fire protection activities had a work period of only 14 days, overtime compensation or compensatory time off would be due for 54 hours (160 minus 106 hours) in the first 14 day work period.

[52 FR 2032, Jan. 16, 1987, as amended at 76 FR 18857, Apr. 5, 2011; 82 FR 2229, Jan. 9, 2017]

### § 553.232 Overtime pay requirements.

If a public agency pays employees subject to section 7(k) for overtime hours worked in cash wages rather than compensatory time off, such wages must be paid at one and one-half times the employees' regular rates of pay. In addition, employees who have accrued the maximum 480 hours of compensatory time must be paid cash wages of time and one-half their regular rates of pay for overtime hours in excess of the maximum for the work period set forth in § 553.230.

### § 553.233 "Regular rate" defined.

The rules for computing an employee's "regular rate", for purposes of the Act's overtime pay requirements, are set forth in part 778 of this title. These rules are applicable to employees for whom the section 7(k) exemption is claimed when overtime compensation is provided in cash wages. However, wherever the word "workweek" is used in part 778, the words "work period" should be substituted.