

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Wage and Hour Division  
Washington

DIRECT LINE OF AUTHORITY  
ESTABLISHED IN WAGE-HOUR DIVISION

Establishment of a "direct administrative line of authority" in the Wage and Hour Division from the Administrator through the Regional Directors to payroll inspectors, together with a re-allocation of the regions covering the continental United States, was announced today by Colonel Philip B. Fleming, who is directing the activities of the Division.

An order putting the new policy into effect was contained in a memorandum distributed to the entire organization. The direct control, aiming for "the maximum of orderly enforcement," is designed to improve liaison between the Administrator and the inspection force, which is the direct contact between the Division and employers who must comply with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (Federal Wage and Hour Law).

"The direct administrative line of authority," the memorandum states, "goes from the Administrator to the various Regional Directors with no intervening staff division or other agency. Orders to Regional Directors originating in staff divisions, therefore, will go through the Administrator."

The memorandum continues, "The various Washington staff divisions, (Legal Branch, Cooperation and Inspection Branch, Research and Statistics Branch, Hearings Branch, Industry Committees Branch, etc.) are directed by the Administrator through their respective branch heads. They are in general advisory to the Administrator with certain line functions to perform for the Administrator at his direction."

"Such a policy of decentralization," says Colonel Fleming, "requires that there be close and direct administrative supervision, which for clarity in operation and directness in action must and will come from the Administrator.

"Staff divisions at the same time lose nothing in importance or in effectiveness, they have a greater responsibility to keep the Administrator, as the directive force, closely and fully informed at all times on the technical and administrative aspects of the enforcement program. Staff divisions will exercise, through the Administrator, a strong guiding influence and directive force which is certainly equivalent and probably greater than that heretofore exercised by them."

The memorandum says, "This is a particularly significant reorientation of lines of authority with respect to Cooperation and Inspection. The direct administrative line of authority goes from the Administrator through the Regional Director to the Inspectors in the field. The C. & I. Branch reviews as a staff function all regional action in the cooperation and inspection field for the dual purpose of determining the quality and effectiveness of such actions and of deriving policy from action in the field. Such policy, through the Administrator, will from time to time be passed on in the form of direction to the Regional Directors. This, of course, will require field supervision and inspection of regional activities by the C. & I. Branch for the Administrator. Furthermore, since the C. & I. Branch is reviewing all the action under this function, the training of Inspectors shall be under the direction of the C. & I. Branch."

At the same time Colonel Fleming made public a re-allocation of the entire country into 15 regions, as compared with the 17 into which the country previously had been divided. The principal change in the regional set-up is the re-apportionment of the Western States. Under the new set-up the region with offices in Kansas City and branch offices in St. Louis and Denver, will have for its area Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Wyoming; the Dallas

region with a branch office in San Antonio will include Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas; while the San Francisco region with branches in Los Angeles and Seattle will control Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Alaska and Hawaii.

Colonel Fleming announced at the same time the addition to his office of Baird Snyder, former Chief Engineer of the Farm Security Administration, who will relieve him of part of the load of directing the activities of the Division.

The personnel of the Division in the field has been increased sharply during the past few months. During the same period General Counsel George A. McMulty has carried forward the staffing of the Legal Branch throughout the country. The Division now has a total personnel of 1173, of whom 701 are in the field. The field organization includes 298 inspectors, 70 attorneys, 106 payroll examiners and a clerical force of 205.

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