

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION  
Washington

FLEMING ORDERS PAY INCREASE FOR 200,000 GARMENT WORKERS

Approval of the Apparel Industry Committee's minimum wage recommendation increasing the hourly wage rates of about 200,000 garment workers located in practically every State of the Union was announced today by Colonel Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division. This is the largest number of workers to be given increases by an industrial wage order under the Fair Labor Standards Act (Federal Wage and Hour Law).

"The apparel wage order," said Colonel Fleming, "will have more widespread effect than any order yet issued by the Division. Wage competition has prevented even the socially-minded employers in certain sections of this industry from paying what America considers a decent wage. Before deciding to issue the order I carefully reviewed the extensive evidence on the economic and competitive conditions in the industry. The evidence leads me to believe that the prices people pay for clothes, even the lowest-priced garments, will not be materially affected. From now on, economies effected by the industry will not be accomplished by cutting wages."

The wage order establishing minimum wage rates of 32-1/2, 35, 37-1/2 and 40 cents an hour for 26 divisions of the industry will become effective July 15. These rates were recommended by a committee of 48 members, equally representative of the public, the employees and the employers, and under the chairmanship of Louis Kirstein, Boston merchant.

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Colonel Fleming's order brings the number given wage increases above 30 cents an hour to more than 500,000. Previous wage orders issued have been for the textile, hosiery, millinery, shoe, knitted underwear, and knitted outerwear industries.

The order will increase the payroll of cut-and-sew garment establishments by an estimated \$10,000,000 a year. This brings the increase in payrolls by wage orders based on industry committee recommendations to more than \$25,000,000 a year. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act the 30 cents-an-hour minimum wage which went into effect on October 24 last, increased the payrolls of the apparel industry by \$5,500,000. The \$10,000,000 increase under this order is in addition to that.

Some 650,000 workers are engaged in the apparel industry as defined in this order. The industry is carried on in 12,500 establishments and its annual production is valued at about \$2,700,000,000.

The divisions of the industry under this order operated under 32 code authorities under the N.R.A.

The industry as defined is largely based on the operations of sewing machines and employs a high percentage of women workers.

More than half of the workers who will be given wage increases under the order are in six divisions of the apparel industry.

Workers in the division entitled "Single pants of 100 percent cotton fabric, overalls, coveralls, and work shirts" for whom the wage order guarantees payment of at least 32-1/2 cents an hour, number 66,000. Thirty-three thousand of these workers have been realizing a lower hourly rate of pay.

About 68,000 workers are engaged in the division listed as "Men's dress shirts, collars and sleeping wear," for which the minimum rate is 32-1/2 cents. About 28,000 of these workers have been making less.

Some 135,000 workers are engaged in manufacturing dresses. The wage order calls for a payment of at least 35 cents an hour in this division. Thirty-one thousand of these workers have been making less.

Some 126,000 workers are engaged in making men's and boys' clothing, including men's summer wash suits. Some 13,000 of these have been making less than the 40 cents an hour ordered for this division of the industry.

Some 29,000 workers are engaged in making infants' and children's outerwear. About 12,000 of these have been making less than the 35 cents an hour prescribed.

Some 30,000 workers are engaged in the division entitled "Women's underwear, night wear and negligees made of woven fabric." Some 11,000 of these have been making less than the 35 cents prescribed in the wage order.

Colonel Fleming approved all the recommendations of the committee except those for two embroidery divisions. He found that the embroidery recommendations were not supported by evidence at the public hearing on the committee's recommendations.

The committee recommended that manufacture of apparels under the definition in Puerto Rico remain at the statutory minimum of 30 cents an hour and Colonel Fleming approved this recommendation.

The effect of any minimum wage rates which might be set upon the cotton garment industry in the South was the subject of extensive testimony before the industry committee and before the administrative hearing. The number of workers in the South whose hourly wage rates will be increased by the order is about 45,000 against some 145,000 in the rest of the country. However, the 45,000 represents about 70 percent of the garment workers engaged in the South, while the 145,000 is about 25 percent of those so engaged in the rest of the country. The committee recommended 32-1/2 cents for the manufacture of men's cotton work clothes, shirts and woven underwear, a major factor in the Southern branch of the industry. After reviewing the evidence and arguments of opposing counsel, Colonel Fleming approved this recommendation.

The definition of the apparel industry includes all apparel, apparel furnishings and accessories made by cutting and sewing or embroidery processes, except: knitted outerwear, knitted underwear, hosiery, men's fur felt, wool felt, straw and silk hats and bodies, ladies' and children's millinery, furs, and boots and shoes.

The divisions of the industry and the minimum wage applicable to each follow:

MEN'S WEAR

Men's and Boys' Clothing (40 Cents)

The manufacture of men's and boys' suits, overcoats, topcoats, tailored uniforms, and men's summer wash suits, not elsewhere specified, from any woven materials or from purchased knitted materials.

Sportswear and Other Odd Outerwear (40 Cents)

The manufacture of men's women's, and children's sportswear and other odd outerwear, including windbreakers, lumberjackets, mackinaws and mackinaw coats, melton jackets, blanket-lined and similar coats, leatherette coats and jackets, hunting coats and vests, riding clothing, ski-suits and snow-suits (except children's ski-suits and snow-suits), and similar garments not elsewhere specified, from any woven materials or from purchased knitted materials.

Leather and Sheep-Lined Garments (40 Cents)

The manufacture of leather, leather trimmed, and sheep-lined garments for men, women or children.

Rainwear (40 Cents)

The manufacture of water-proofed garments and raincoats from oiled cloth or other materials, whether vulcanized, rubberized, cravenetted, or otherwise processed.

Single Pants and Breeches Other Than Those of 100 Percent Cotton Fabric (37 $\frac{1}{2}$  Cents)

The manufacture of men's and boys' separate trousers or pants, breeches and knickers from any fabric except that consisting of 100 percent cotton.

Single Pants of 100 Percent Cotton Fabric, Overalls, Coveralls and Work Shirts (32 $\frac{1}{2}$  Cents)

The manufacture of single pants made of 100 percent cotton fabric; overalls; overall jackets (regardless of type of fabric used in lining); men's, boys' and children's coveralls; and work shirts.

Dress Shirts, Collars and Sleeping Wear (32 $\frac{1}{2}$  Cents)

The manufacture of men's and boys' dress shirts, sport shirts, flannel shirts, blouses, collars and sleeping wear from any woven fabric or from any purchased knit fabric.

Men's and Boys' Underwear of Woven Fabric (32 $\frac{1}{2}$  Cents)

The manufacture of men's and boys' underwear from any woven fabric.

WOMEN'S WEAR

Cloaks, Suits and Separate Skirts (40 Cents)

The manufacture of women's, misses', juniors' and children's coats, reefers, jackets, capes, wraps, riding habits, knickers, suits, tailored ensembles, skirts and jumper skirts, from any woven materials or from purchased knitted materials.

Dresses (35 Cents)

The manufacture of women's, misses' and juniors' dresses, frocks, gowns and dressmaker ensembles, for whatever use, from any woven materials or from purchased knitted materials.

Blouses, Shirtwaists, Neckwear and Scarfs (35 Cents)

The manufacture of women's, misses' and juniors' blouses, blousettes, waists, shirtwaists, tunic blouses, vestees, guimpes, gilets; women's, misses', juniors' and children's neckwear, toppers, scarfs, rufflings and ruchings, and similar garments from any woven material or from purchased knitted materials.

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Corsets and Allied Garments (35 Cents)

The manufacture of corsets, step-in-corsets, brassieres, bandeau-brassieres, garter-belts, girdle corsets or step-in-corsets attached to brassieres or bandeau-brassieres, corselets, foundation garments, all similar body-supporting garments and corset accessories from whatever material.

Underwear, Nightwear and Negligees made of Woven Fabric (35 Cents)

The manufacture of women's, misses', and children's undershirts, panties, bloomers, step-ins, athletic underwear, slips, petticoats, chemises, nightgowns, pajamas, negligees, housecoats, bed jackets, waist suits, and infants' underwear, from any woven materials.

Infants' and Children's Outerwear (35 Cents)

The manufacture of infants' and children's dresses, skirt and blouse suits, rompers, creepers, sportswear and play apparel, including sun-suits, gym-suits, snow-suits, ski-suits, slacks and beachwear, infants' outerwear, brother and sister suits, baby boys' and boys' wash suits and similar infants' and children's garments not elsewhere specified, from any woven materials or from purchased materials.

Robes (35 Cents)

The manufacture of men's, women's and children's bath, lounging and beach robes and dressing gowns, from any woven materials or purchased knitted materials.

Washable Service Apparel (35 Cents)

The manufacture of women's washable service uniforms, including waitress, nurses', and maids' uniforms, aprons, jackets, and smocks, and similar washable service garments not elsewhere specified; and the manufacture of men's washable service uniforms (except tailored uniforms) whether as separate coats or trousers, or as combinations thereof, and similar washable service garments not elsewhere specified.

ACCESSORIES AND SPECIAL PRODUCTS

Caps and Cloth Hats (40 Cents)

The manufacture of men's and boys' hats or caps, (except men's and boys' fur-felt, wool-felt, straw, and silk and opera hats and bodies) from any woven material, any purchased knitted material, leather, leatherette, or any combination of such materials, including, but without limitation, uniform caps, aviation caps, and shop and railroad caps; and including the manufacture of cap visors, bands and brims, and the manufacture of sweat bands from any material other than leather.

Belts (40 Cents)

The manufacture of men's, boys', women's, misses' and children's separate belts from leather, imitation leather, or other material or fabric.

Covered Buttons and Buckles (35 Cents)

The manufacturing process of covering buttons and buckles with cloth, leather or similar materials.

Garters, Suspenders and Arm Bands (35 Cents)

The manufacture of garters, suspenders, arm bands, and other elastic woven products (except orthopedic and athletic) from webbing, leather, or other material.

Ladies' Handbags (35 Cents)

The manufacture of ladies', misses' and children's handbags, pocketbooks and purses from any material of any kind or nature; except metal handbags, pocketbooks, purses and mesh bags.

Artificial Flowers and Feathers (35 Cents)

The manufacture, processing and fabrication of artificial flowers, buds, foliage, fruits, plants, and feathers, or parts thereof from any material; and the preservation and processing of natural flowers and feathers.

Men's Neckwear and Scarfs (35 Cents)

The manufacture of men's and boys' neckties, scarfs and mufflers from any woven materials or from purchased knitted materials.

Gloves and Mittens Other Than Work Gloves and Mittens (35 Cents)

The manufacture of all gloves and mittens (except athletic) other than work gloves and mittens, from leather, woven or knitted fabrics or from any combinations of these materials.

Work Gloves and Mittens (32½ Cents)

The manufacture of work gloves and mittens from fabric, leather, or fabric and leather combined, or knitted materials.

Handkerchiefs (32½ Cents)

The manufacture of men's, women's and children's handkerchiefs, plain or ornamented, from any materials.

The apparel industry committee was appointed December 19, 1938, after several months of negotiations and it started its deliberations on January 31, 1939. Owing to the great complexity of the apparel problem, it was decided that four subcommittees should study and receive evidence with respect to the various branches of the industry. At the conclusion of a series of subcommittee meetings extending over a period of months, the committee as a whole met in June, 1939, to receive the reports and recommendations of the subcommittees. The final report and recommendations of the committee, covering the various divisions, was submitted to the Administrator in September, 1939.

Public hearings on these recommendations started on November 13, 1939, and extended to January 10, 1940, during which time hundreds of interested parties were heard and nearly 6,000 pages of testimony was taken. After interested parties had been given opportunity to file briefs with the Administrator, they were permitted to present oral argument before him. This oral argument took place for three days beginning March 13, 1940. The Administrator considered the entire record and consulted with staff members over an extended period. An opinion of 450 pages will be issued in connection with the order.

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