

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

WAGE-HOUR ADMINISTRATOR GIVES FIGURES ON 40-HOUR WEEK

Nearly 2,000,000 wage earners in any week of average industrial activity will be affected by the rule of time and a half pay after 40 hours which goes into effect Thursday, October 24, Colonel Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, U. S. Department of Labor, announced today.

It is estimated that a spot check made in any recent week probably would find about 2,650,000 wage earners working more than 40 hours a week. More than 700,000 of these are paid time and a half for work over 40 hours as a matter of employment practice, leaving the number directly affected at something less than 2,000,000.

A check made in another week would not necessarily find the same wage earners working more than 40 hours. During the course of the year a great many more workers will be affected, Colonel Fleming said, either by payment of time and a half for overtime in busy weeks, or in being released from work at the end of 40 hours instead of working the longer hours customary in previous years.

Railroad workers and truck and bus employees whose work affects safety operation are exempt from the maximum hour provisions of the law and are therefore not affected by the October 24 change. The law does not apply to employees of retail or service establishments.

As passed in 1938 the law provides for a standard workweek of 40 hours after two years. The standard workweek was 44 hours in the first year and 42 hours in the second year of the law.

The 40-hour week already has found wide favor in American manufacturing industries, Colonel Fleming said. Many industries continued it voluntarily after the invalidation of the National Industrial Recovery Act (N.R.A.). Labor

statistics show, he said, that 40 hours became the standard workweek in many industries after adoption of the five-day week in 1926 by the Ford Motor Company. As an indication of how generally it has been adopted, Colonel Fleming pointed to statistics showing that the average hours worked by all persons employed in manufacturing during July of this year (the last month for which figures are available) was 37.3 hours a week.

Time and one-half must be paid for work in excess of 40 hours for the first full workweek starting after midnight, Wednesday, October 23. In establishments where payroll records customarily set the workweek from Monday to Saturday, the overtime rule after 40 hours will apply to the workweek starting Monday, October 28, and continue thereafter.

Establishment of a standard 40-hour week is one of the two objectives of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, or Federal Wage and Hour Law. The other is a universal minimum wage of 40 cents an hour in industries engaged in interstate commerce or in the production of goods for interstate commerce. This goes into effect on October 24, 1945.

Until then the minimum wage is 30 cents an hour except in industries covered by wage orders. Eleven wage orders covering the manufacture of textiles, clothing, paper and leather, have established minimum wages from 32-1/2 to 40 cents an hour in these industries.

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