

§ 778.404

from the duty of computing overtime compensation for an employee under section 7(a) unless the employee is paid pursuant to a plan which actually meets all the requirements of the exemption. These requirements will be discussed separately in the ensuing sections.

§ 778.404 Purposes of exemption.

The exception to the requirements of section 7(a) provided by section 7(f) of the Act is designed to provide a means whereby the employer of an employee whose duties necessitate irregular hours of work and whose total wages if computed solely on an hourly rate basis would of necessity vary widely from week to week, may guarantee the payment, week-in, week-out, of at least a fixed amount based on his regular hourly rate. Section 7(f) was proposed and enacted in 1949 with the stated purpose of giving express statutory validity, subject to prescribed limitations, to a judicial "gloss on the Act" by which an exception to the usual rule as to the actual regular rate had been recognized by a closely divided Supreme Court as permissible with respect to employment in such situations under so-called "Belo" contracts. See *McComb v. Utica Knitting Co.*, 164 F. 2d 670, rehearing denied 164 F. 2d 678 (C.A. 2); *Walling v. A. H. Belo Co.*, 316 U.S. 624; *Walling v. Halliburton Oil Well Cementing Co.*, 331 U.S. 17; 95 Cong. Rec. 11893, 12365, 14938, A2396, A5233, A5476. Such a contract affords to the employee the security of a regular weekly income and benefits the employer by enabling him to anticipate and control in advance at least some part of his labor costs. A guaranteed wage plan also provides a means of limiting overtime computation costs so that wide leeway is provided for working employees overtime without increasing the cost to the employer, which he would otherwise incur under the Act for working employees in excess of the statutory maximum hours standard. Recognizing both the inherent advantages and disadvantages of guaranteed wage plans, when viewed in this light, Congress sought to strike a balance between them which would, on the one hand, provide a feasible method of guaranteeing pay to employees who needed

29 CFR Ch. V (7-1-10 Edition)

this protection without, on the other hand, nullifying the overtime requirements of the Act. The provisions of section 7(f) set forth the conditions under which, in the view of Congress, this may be done. Plans which do not meet these conditions were not thought to provide sufficient advantage to the employee to justify Congress in relieving employers of the overtime liability section 7(a).

§ 778.405 What types of employees are affected.

The type of employment agreement permitted under section 7(f) can be made only with (or by his representatives on behalf of) an employee whose "duties * * * necessitate irregular hours of work." It is clear that no contract made with an employee who works a regularly scheduled workweek or whose schedule involves alternating fixed workweeks will qualify under this subsection. Even if an employee does in fact work a variable workweek, the question must still be asked whether his duties necessitate irregular hours of work. The subsection is not designed to apply in a situation where the hours of work vary from week to week at the discretion of the employer or the employee, nor to a situation where the employee works an irregular number of hours according to a predetermined schedule. The nature of the employee's duties must be such that neither he nor his employer can either control or anticipate with any degree of certainty the number of hours he must work from week to week. Furthermore, for the reasons set forth in § 778.406, his duties must necessitate significant variations in weekly hours of work both below and above the statutory weekly limit on nonovertime hours. Some examples of the types of employees whose duties may necessitate irregular hours of work would be outside buyers, on-call servicemen, insurance adjusters, newspaper reporters and photographers, propmen, script girls and others engaged in similar work in the motion picture industry, firefighters, troubleshooters and the like. There are some employees in these groups whose hours of work are conditioned by factors beyond the control of their employer or themselves. However, the