

§ 5.24 The basic hourly rate of pay.

“The basic hourly rate of pay” is that part of a laborer’s or mechanic’s wages which the Secretary of Labor would have found and included in wage determinations prior to the 1964 amendments. The Secretary of Labor is required to continue to make a separate finding of this portion of the wage. In general, this portion of the wage is the cash payment made directly to the laborer or mechanic. It does not include fringe benefits.

§ 5.25 Rate of contribution or cost for fringe benefits.

(a) Under the amendments, the Secretary is obligated to make a separate finding of the rate of contribution or cost of fringe benefits. Only the amount of contributions or costs for fringe benefits which meet the requirements of the act will be considered by the Secretary. These requirements are discussed in this subpart.

(b) The rate of contribution or cost is ordinarily an hourly rate, and will be reflected in the wage determination as such. In some cases, however, the contribution or cost for certain fringe benefits may be expressed in a formula or method of payment other than an hourly rate. In such cases, the Secretary may in his discretion express in the wage determination the rate of contribution or cost used in the formula or method or may convert it to an hourly rate of pay whenever he finds that such action would facilitate the administration of the Act. See § 5.5(a)(1)(i) and (iii).

§ 5.26 “ * * * contribution irrevocably made * * * to a trustee or to a third person”.

Under the fringe benefits provisions (section 1(b)(2) of the Act) the amount of contributions for fringe benefits must be made to a trustee or to a third person irrevocably. The “third person” must be one who is not affiliated with the contractor or subcontractor. The trustee must assume the usual fiduciary responsibilities imposed upon trustees by applicable law. The trust or fund must be set up in such a way that in no event will the contractor or subcontractor be able to recapture any of the contributions paid in or any way

divert the funds to his own use or benefit. Although contributions made to a trustee or third person pursuant to a benefit plan must be irrevocably made, this does not prevent return to the contractor or subcontractor of sums which he had paid in excess of the contributions actually called for by the plan, as where such excess payments result from error or from the necessity of making payments to cover the estimated cost of contributions at a time when the exact amount of the necessary contributions under the plan is not yet ascertained. For example, a benefit plan may provide for definite insurance benefits for employees in the event of the happening of a specified contingency such as death, sickness, accident, etc., and may provide that the cost of such definite benefits, either in full or any balance in excess of specified employee contributions, will be borne by the contractor or subcontractor. In such a case the return by the insurance company to the contractor or subcontractor of sums paid by him in excess of the amount required to provide the benefits which, under the plan, are to be provided through contributions by the contractor or subcontractor, will not be deemed a recapture or diversion by the employer of contributions made pursuant to the plan. (See Report of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, S. Rep. No. 963, 88th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 5.)

§ 5.27 “ * * * fund, plan, or program”.

The contributions for fringe benefits must be made pursuant to a fund, plan or program (sec. 1(b)(2)(A) of the act). The phrase “fund, plan, or program” is merely intended to recognize the various types of arrangements commonly used to provide fringe benefits through employer contributions. The phrase is identical with language contained in section 3(1) of the Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act. In interpreting this phrase, the Secretary will be guided by the experience of the Department in administering the latter statute. (See Report of Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, S. Rep. No. 963, 88th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 5.)