

The Davis-Bacon Act, as Amended



U.S. Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division

WH Publication 1246
(Revised April 2009)

Materials contained in this publication is in the public domain and may be reproduced, fully or partially, without permission of the federal Government. Source credit is requested but not required. Permission is required only to reproduce any copyrighted material contained herein.

This material will be made available to Sensory impaired individuals upon request.
Voice phone: 202-693-0675
TDD* phone: 202-523-9530

PUBLIC LAW 107-217—AUG. 21, 2002 [as amended¹]

An Act

To revise, codify, and enact without substantive change certain general and permanent laws, related to public buildings, property, and works, as title 40, United States Code, “Public Buildings, Property, and Works”.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. TITLE 40, UNITED STATES CODE.

Certain general and permanent laws of the United States, related to public buildings, property, and works, are revised, codified, and enacted as title 40, United States Code, “Public Buildings, Property, and Works”, as follows:

TITLE 40—PUBLIC BUILDINGS, PROPERTY, AND WORKS

* * * *

SUBTITLE II—PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND WORKS

* * * *

PART A—GENERAL

* * * *

CHAPTER 31 – GENERAL

* * * *

SUBCHAPTER IV - WAGE RATE REQUIREMENTS

Sec. 3141. Definition

In this subchapter, the following definitions apply:

(1) Federal government.— The term “Federal Government” has the same meaning that the term “United States” had in the Act of March 3, 1931 (ch. 411, 46 Stat. 1494) (known as the Davis-Bacon Act).²

(2) Wages, scale of wages, wage rates, minimum wages, and prevailing wages.— The terms “wages”, “scale of wages”, “wage rates”, “minimum wages”, and “prevailing wages” include—

(A) the basic hourly rate of pay; and

¹ Pub. L. 109-284 Sec. 6(11), (12), and (13) made three minor technical corrections in Secs 3141(1), and 3142(d) and (e). (Sept. 27, 2006, 120 Stat. 1213.)

² The Davis-Bacon Act, referred to in par. (1), is act of Mar. 3, 1931, ch. 411, 46 Stat. 1494, as amended, which was classified generally to sections 276a to 276a-5 of former Title 40, Public Buildings, Property, and Works, and was repealed and reenacted as sections 3141-3144, 3146, and 3147 of this title by Pub. L. 107-217, Secs. 1, 6(b), Aug. 21, 2002, 116 Stat. 1062, 1304.

(B) for medical or hospital care, pensions on retirement or death, compensation for injuries or illness resulting from occupational activity, or insurance to provide any of the forgoing, for unemployment benefits, life insurance, disability and sickness insurance, or accident insurance, for vacation and holiday pay, for defraying the costs of apprenticeship or other similar programs, or for other bona fide fringe benefits, but only where the contractor or subcontractor is not required by other federal, state, or local law to provide any of those benefits, the amount of—

(i) the rate of contribution irrevocably made by a contractor or subcontractor to a trustee or to a third person under a fund, plan, or program; and

(ii) the rate of costs to the contractor or subcontractor that may be reasonably anticipated in providing benefits to laborers and mechanics pursuant to an enforceable commitment to carry out a financially responsible plan or program which was communicated in writing to the laborers and mechanics affected.

Sec. 3142. Rate of wages for laborers and mechanics

(a) Application.— The advertised specifications for every contract in excess of \$2,000, to which the Federal Government or the District of Columbia is a party, for construction, alteration, or repair, including painting and decorating, of public buildings and public works of the Government or the District of Columbia that are located in a State or the District of Columbia and which requires or involves the employment of mechanics or laborers shall contain a provision stating the minimum wages to be paid various classes of laborers and mechanics.

(b) Based on Prevailing Wage.— The minimum wages shall be based on the wages the Secretary of Labor determines to be prevailing for the corresponding classes of laborers and mechanics employed on projects of a character similar to the contract work in the civil subdivision of the State in which the work is to be performed, or in the District of Columbia if the work is to be performed there.

(c) Stipulations Required in Contract.— Every contract based upon the specifications referred to in subsection (a) must contain stipulations that—

(1) the contractor or subcontractor shall pay all mechanics and laborers employed directly on the site of the work, unconditionally and at least once a week, and without subsequent deduction or rebate on any account, the full amounts accrued at time of payment, computed at wage rates not less than those stated in the advertised specifications, regardless of any contractual relationship which may be alleged to exist between the contractor or subcontractor and the laborers and mechanics;

(2) the contractor will post the scale of wages to be paid in a prominent and easily accessible place at the site of the work; and

(3) there may be withheld from the contractor so much of accrued payments as the contracting officer considers necessary to pay to laborers and mechanics employed by the contractor or any subcontractor on the work the difference between the rates of wages required by the contract to be paid laborers and mechanics on the work and the rates of wages received by the laborers and mechanics and not refunded to the contractor or subcontractors or their agents.

(d) Discharge of Obligation.— The obligation of a contractor or subcontractor to make payment in accordance with the prevailing wage determinations of the Secretary of Labor, under this subchapter and other laws incorporating this subchapter by reference, may be discharged by making payments in cash, by making contributions described in section 3141(2)(B)(i) of this title, by assuming an enforceable commitment to bear the costs of a plan or program referred to in section 3141(2)(B)(ii) of this title, or by any combination of payment, contribution, and assumption, where the aggregate of the payments, contributions, and costs is not less than the basic hourly rate of pay plus the amount referred to in section 3141(2)(B) of this title.

(e) Overtime Pay.— In determining the overtime pay to which a laborer or mechanic is entitled under any federal law, the regular or basic hourly rate of pay (or other alternative rate on which premium rate of overtime compensation is computed) of the laborer or mechanic is deemed to be the rate computed under section 3141(2)(A) of this title, except that where the amount of payments, contributions, or costs incurred with respect to the laborer or mechanic exceeds the applicable prevailing wage, the regular or basic hourly rate of pay (or other alternative rate) is the amount of payments, contributions, or costs actually incurred with respect to the laborer or mechanic minus the greater of the amount of contributions or costs of the types described in section 3141(2)(B) of this title actually incurred with respect to the laborer or mechanic or the amount determined under section 3141(2)(B) of this title but not actually paid.

3141(2)(B) of this title but not actually paid. Sec.3143.

Every contract within the scope of this subchapter shall contain a provision that if the contracting officer finds that any laborer or mechanic employed by the contractor or any subcontractor directly on the site of the work covered by the contract has been or is being paid a rate of wages less than the rate of wages required by the contract to be paid, the Federal Government by written notice to the contractor may terminate the contractor's right to proceed with the work or the part of the work as to which there has been a failure to pay the required wages. The Government may have the work completed, by contract or otherwise, and the contractor and the contractor's sureties shall be liable to the Government for any excess costs the Government incurs.

Sec. 3144. Authority of Comptroller General to pay wages and list contractors violating contracts

(a) Payment of Wages.—

(1) In general.— The Comptroller General shall pay directly to laborers and mechanics from any accrued payments withheld under the terms of a contract any wages found to be due laborers and mechanics under this subchapter.

(2) Right of action.— If the accrued payments withheld under the terms of the contract are insufficient to reimburse all the laborers and mechanics who have not been paid the wages required under this subchapter, the laborers and mechanics have the same right to bring a civil action and intervene against the contractor and the contractor's sureties as is conferred by law on persons furnishing labor or materials. In those proceedings it is not a

defense that the laborers and mechanics accepted or agreed to accept less than the required rate of wages or voluntarily made refunds.

(b) List of Contractors Violating Contracts.—

(1) In general.— The Comptroller General shall distribute to all departments of the Federal Government a list of the names of persons whom the Comptroller General has found to have disregarded their obligations to employees and subcontractors.

(2) Restriction on awarding contracts.— No contract shall be awarded to persons appearing on the list or to any firm, corporation, partnership, or association in which the persons have an interest until three years have elapsed from the date of publication of the list.

* * * *

Sec. 3146. Effect on other federal laws

This subchapter does not supersede or impair any authority otherwise granted by federal law to provide for the establishment of specific wage rates.

Sec. 3147. Suspension of this subchapter during a national emergency

The President may suspend the provisions of this subchapter during a national emergency.

Sec. 3148. Application of this subchapter to certain contracts

This subchapter applies to a contract authorized by law that is made without regard to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 5), or on a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee basis or otherwise without advertising for proposals, if this subchapter otherwise would apply to the contract.