

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Labor Commissioner Cites Los Angeles Car Wash Businesses over \$1.3 Million for Wage Theft

Los Angeles—The California Labor Commissioner's Office last week cited car wash businesses in the Los Angeles area more than \$1.3 million for wage theft following a two-day enforcement activity.

The majority of the violations were found at 35 car wash businesses that failed to register with the Labor Commissioner's Office, as required by law. The inspections uncovered numerous violations of state wage and hour laws affecting nearly 400 workers.

"These citations serve as a reminder that wage theft will not be tolerated. The Labor Commissioner's office targets its enforcement efforts on employers who intentionally skirt the law," said Christine Baker, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), which oversees the Labor Commissioner's Office.

The 35 unregistered car wash businesses reflect a significant drop in registration from 2013 to 2014.

"When car wash businesses fail to register, it is often an indicator of wage theft. We are also following up with some of the inspected car washes to conduct full wage audits," said Labor Commissioner Julie A. Su. "We want to make sure car wash workers are paid what they are owed and that employers who follow the law know we are on their side."

Violations cited included the failure to pay workers minimum wage and overtime, which resulted in \$412,200 in penalties and \$308,584 in liquidated damages. An additional 17 violations with citations totaling \$218,000 were issued to employers who did not carry workers' compensation insurance coverage.

The Labor Commissioner's Office, formally known as the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, inspects workplaces for wage and hour violations, adjudicates wage claims, enforces prevailing wage rates and apprenticeship standards in public works projects, investigates retaliation and whistleblower complaints, issues licenses and

registrations for businesses, and educates the public on labor laws. Updated information on [California labor laws](#) is available online.

The [Wage Theft is a Crime](#) public awareness campaign, launched last year by DIR and its Labor Commissioner's Office, has helped inform workers of their rights. The campaign includes multilingual print and outdoor advertising as well as radio commercials on ethnic stations in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong and Tagalog.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may call the toll-free California Workers' Information Line at (866) 924-9757 for recorded information in Spanish and English on a variety of work-related topics.

Members of the press may contact Erika Monterroza at (510) 286-1164 or Peter Melton at (510) 286-7046 for interview requests or for more information.

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The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#) (DIR), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). For non-media inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 1-844-LABOR-DIR (1-844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.