

29 C.F.R. Provisions for Wage Order 16

The following Sections of 29 Code of Federal Regulations Are referenced in Wage Order 16. These Sections were all effective as of the date of the Wage Order. The effective Sections for Wage Order 1 - 13, and 15 are slightly different and are contained in a separate document. Wage Orders 14 and 17 do not refer to any Sections of the Code of Federal Regulations.

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Sec. 541.1 Executive.

The term employee employed in a bona fide * * * executive * * * capacity in section 13(a) (1) of the Act shall mean any employee:

(a) Whose primary duty consists of the management of the enterprise in which he is employed or of a customarily recognized department or subdivision thereof; and

(b) Who customarily and regularly directs the work of two or more other employees therein; and

(c) Who has the authority to hire or fire other employees or whose suggestions and recommendations as to the hiring or firing and as to the advancement and promotion or any other change of status of other employees will be given particular weight;

Sec. 541.102 Management.

(a) In the usual situation the determination of whether a particular kind of work is exempt or nonexempt in nature is not difficult. In the vast majority of cases the bona fide executive employee performs managerial and supervisory functions which are easily recognized as within the scope of the exemption.

(b) For example, it is generally clear that work such as the following is exempt work when it is performed by an employee in the management of his department or the supervision of the employees under him: Interviewing, selecting, and training of employees; setting and adjusting their rates of pay and hours of work; directing their work; maintaining their production or sales records for use in supervision or control; appraising their productivity and efficiency for the purpose of recommending promotions or other changes in their status; handling their complaints and grievances and disciplining them when necessary; planning the work; determining the techniques to be used; apportioning the work among the workers; determining the type of materials, supplies, machinery or tools to be used or merchandise to be bought, stocked and sold; controlling the flow and distribution of materials or merchandise and supplies; providing for the safety of the men and the property.

Sec. 541.104 Department or subdivision.

(a) In order to qualify under Sec. 541.1, the employee's managerial duties must be performed with respect to the enterprise in which he is employed or a customarily recognized department or subdivision thereof. The phrase ``a customarily recognized department or subdivision'' is intended to distinguish between a mere collection of men assigned from time to time to a specific job or series of jobs and a unit with permanent status and function. In order properly to classify an individual as an executive he must be more than merely a supervisor of two or more employees; nor is it sufficient that he merely participates in the management of the unit. He must be in charge of and have as his primary duty the management of a recognized unit which has a continuing function.

(b) In the vast majority of cases there is no difficulty in determining whether an individual is in charge of a customarily recognized department or subdivision of a department. For example, it is clear that where an enterprise comprises more than one establishment, the employee in charge of each establishment may be considered in charge of a subdivision of the enterprise. Questions arise principally in cases involving supervisors who work outside the employer's establishment, move from place to place, or have different subordinates at different times.

(c) In such instances, in determining whether the employee is in charge of a recognized unit with a continuing function, it is the division's position that the unit supervised need not be physically within the employer's establishment and may move from place to place, and that continuity of the same subordinate personnel is not absolutely essential to the existence of a recognized unit with a continuing function, although in the ordinary case a fixed location and continuity of personnel are both helpful in establishing the existence of such a unit. The following examples will illustrate these points.

(d) The projects on which an individual in charge of a certain type of construction work is employed may occur at different locations, and he may even hire most of his workforce at these locations. The mere fact that he moves his location would not invalidate his exemption if there are other factors which show that he is actually in charge of a recognized unit with a continuing function in the organization.

(e) Nor will an otherwise exempt employee lose the exemption merely because he draws the men under his supervision from a pool, if other factors are present which indicate that he is in charge of a recognized unit with a continuing function. For instance, if this employee is in charge of the unit which has the continuing responsibility for making all installations for his employer, or all installations in a particular city or a designated portion of a city, he would be in charge of a department or subdivision despite the fact that he draws his subordinates from a pool of available men.

(f) It cannot be said, however, that a supervisor drawn from a pool of supervisors who supervises employees assigned to him from a pool and who is assigned a job or series of jobs from day to day or week to week has the status of an executive. Such an employee is not in charge of a recognized unit with a continuing function.

Sec. 541.105 Two or more other employees.

(a) An employee will qualify as an ``executive'' under Sec. 541.1 only if he customarily and regularly supervises at least two full-time employees or the equivalent. For example, if the ``executive'' supervises

one full-time and two part-time employees of whom one works morning and one, afternoons; or four part-time employees, two of whom work mornings and two afternoons, this requirement would be met.

(b) The employees supervised must be employed in the department which the ``executive'' is managing.

(c) It has been the experience of the divisions that a supervisor of a few as two employees usually performs nonexempt work in excess of the general 20-percent tolerance provided in Sec. 541.1.

(d) In a large machine shop there may be a machine-shop supervisor and two assistant machine-shop supervisors. Assuming that they meet all the other qualifications Sec. 541.1 and particularly that they are not working foremen, they should certainly qualify for the exemption. A small department in a plant or in an office is usually supervised by one person. Any attempt to classify one of the other workers in the department as an executive merely by giving him an honorific title such as assistant supervisor will almost inevitably fail as there will not be sufficient true supervisory or other managerial work to keep two persons occupied. On the other hand, it is incorrect to assume that in a large department, such as a large shoe department in a retail store which has separate sections for men's, women's, and children's shoes, for example, the supervision cannot be distributed among two or three employees, conceivably among more. In such instances, assuming that the other tests are met, especially the one concerning the performance of nonexempt work, each such employee ``customarily and regularly directs the work of two or more other employees therein.''

(e) An employee who merely assists the manager or buyer of a particular department and supervises two or more employees only in the actual manager's or buyer's absence, however, does not meet this requirement. For example, where a single unsegregated department, such as a women's sportswear department or a men's shirt department in a retail store, is managed by a buyer, with the assistance of one or more assistant buyers, only one employee, the buyer, can be considered an executive, even though the assistant buyers at times exercise some managerial and supervisory responsibilities. A shared responsibility for the supervision of the same two or more employees in the same department does not satisfy the requirement that the employee ``customarily and regularly directs the work of two or more employees therein.''

Sec. 541.106 Authority to hire or fire.

Section 541.1 requires that an exempt executive employee have the authority to hire or fire other employees or that his suggestions and recommendations as to hiring or firing and as to advancement and promotion or any other change of status of the employees who he supervises will be given particular weight. Thus, no employee, whether high or low in the hierarchy of management, can be considered as employed in a bona fide executive capacity unless he is directly concerned either with the hiring or the firing and other change of status of the employees under his supervision, whether by direct action or by recommendation to those to whom the hiring and firing functions are delegated.

Sec. 541.108 Work directly and closely related.

(a) This phrase brings within the category of exempt work not only the actual management of the department and the supervision of the

employees therein, but also activities which are closely associated with the performance of the duties involved in such managerial and supervisory functions or responsibilities. The supervision of employees and the management of a department include a great many directly and closely related tasks which are different from the work performed by subordinates and are commonly performed by supervisors because they are helpful in supervising the employees or contribute to the smooth functioning of the department for which they are responsible. Frequently such exempt work is of a kind which in establishments that are organized differently or which are larger and have greater specialization of function, may be performed by a nonexempt employee hired especially for that purpose. Illustration will serve to make clear the meaning to be given the phrase ``directly and closely related''.

(b) Keeping basic records of working time, for example, is frequently performed by a timekeeper employed for that purpose. In such cases the work is clearly not exempt in nature. In other establishments which are not large enough to employ a timekeeper, or in which the timekeeping function has been decentralized, the supervisor of each department keeps the basic time records of his own subordinates. In these instances, as indicated above, the timekeeping is directly related to the function of managing the particular department and supervising its employees. However, the preparation of a payroll by a supervisor, even the payroll of the employees under his supervision, cannot be considered to be exempt work, since the preparation of a payroll does not aid in the supervision of the employees or the management of the department. Similarly, the keeping by a supervisor of production or sales records of his own subordinates for use in supervision or control would be exempt work, while the maintenance of production records of employees not under his direction would not be exempt work.

(c) Another example of work which may be directly and closely related to the performance of management duties is the distribution of materials or merchandise and supplies. Maintaining control of the flow of materials or merchandise and supplies in a department is ordinarily a responsibility of the managerial employee in charge. In many non-mercantile establishments the actual distribution of materials is performed by nonexempt employees under the supervisor's direction. In other establishments it is not uncommon to leave the actual distribution of materials and supplies in the hands of the supervisor. In such cases it is exempt work since it is directly and closely related to the managerial responsibility of maintaining the flow of materials. In a large retail establishment, however, where the replenishing of stocks of merchandise on the sales floor is customarily assigned to a nonexempt employee, the performance of such work by the manager or buyer of the department is nonexempt. The amount of time the manager or buyer spends in such work must be offset against the statutory tolerance for nonexempt work. The supervision and control of a flow of merchandise to the sales floor, of course, is directly and closely related to the managerial responsibility of the manager or buyer.

(d) Setup work is another illustration of work which may be exempt under certain circumstances if performed by a supervisor. The nature of setup work differs in various industries and for different operations. Some setup work is typically performed by the same employees who perform the ``production'' work; that is, the employee who operates the machine also ``sets it up'' or adjusts it for the particular job at hand. Such setup work is part of the production operation and is not exempt. In other instances the setting up of the work is a highly skilled operation which the ordinary production worker or machine tender typically does not

perform. In some plants, particularly large ones, such setup work may be performed by employees whose duties are not supervisory in nature. In other plants, however, particularly small plants, such work is a regular duty of the executive and is directly and closely related to his responsibility for the work performance of his subordinates and for the adequacy of the final product. Under such circumstances it is exempt work. In the data processing field the work of a supervisor when he performs the more complex or more responsible work in a program utilizing several computer programmers or computer operators would be exempt activity.

(e) Similarly, a supervisor who spot checks and examines the work of his subordinates to determine whether they are performing their duties properly, and whether the product is satisfactory, is performing work which is directly and closely related to his managerial and supervisory functions. However, this kind of examining and checking must be distinguished from the kind which is normally performed by an ``examiner,'' ``checker,'' or ``inspector,'' and which is really a production operation rather than a part of the supervisory function. Likewise, a department manager or buyer in a retail or service establishment who goes about the sales floor observing the work of sales personnel under his supervision to determine the effectiveness of their sales techniques, checking on the quality of customer service being given, or observing customer preferences and reactions to the lines, styles, types, colors, and quality of the merchandise offered, is performing work which is directly and closely related to his managerial and supervisory functions. His actual participation, except for supervisory training or demonstration purposes, in such activities as making sales to customers, replenishing stocks of merchandise on the sales floor, removing merchandise from fitting rooms and returning to stock or shelves, however, is not. The amount of time a manager or buyer spends in the performance of such activities must be included in computing the percentage limitation on nonexempt work.

(f) Watching machines is another duty which may be exempt when performed by a supervisor under proper circumstances. Obviously the mere watching of machines in operation cannot be considered exempt work where, as in certain industries in which the machinery is largely automatic, it is an ordinary production function. Thus, an employee who watches machines for the purpose of seeing that they operate properly or for the purpose of making repairs or adjustments is performing nonexempt work. On the other hand, a supervisor who watches the operation of the machinery in his department in the sense that he ``keeps an eye out for trouble'' is performing work which is directly and closely related to his managerial responsibilities. Making an occasional adjustment in the machinery under such circumstances is also exempt work.

(g) A word of caution is necessary in connection with these illustrations. The recordkeeping, material distributing, setup work, machine watching and adjusting, and inspecting, examining, observing and checking referred to in the examples of exempt work are presumably the kind which are supervisory and managerial functions rather than merely ``production'' work. Frequently it is difficult to distinguish the managerial type from the type which is a production operation. In deciding such difficult cases it should be borne in mind that it is one of the objectives of Sec. 541.1 to exclude from the definition foremen who hold ``dual'' or combination jobs. (See discussion of working foremen in Sec. 541.115.) Thus, if work of this kind takes up a large part of the employee's time it would be evidence that management of the department is not the primary duty of the employee, that such work is a production

operation rather than a function directly and closely related to the supervisory or managerial duties, and that the employee is in reality a combination foreman-``setup'' man, foreman-machine adjuster (or mechanic), or foreman-examiner, floorman-salesperson, etc., rather than a bona fide executive.

Sec. 541.109 Emergencies.

(a) Under certain occasional emergency conditions, work which is normally performed by nonexempt employees and is nonexempt in nature will be directly and closely related to the performance of the exempt functions of management and supervision and will therefore be exempt work. In effect, this means that a bona fide executive who performs work of a normally nonexempt nature on rare occasions because of the existence of a real emergency will not, because of the performance of such emergency work, lose the exemption. Bona fide executives include among their responsibilities the safety of the employees under their supervision, the preservation and protection of the merchandise, machinery or other property of the department or subdivision in their charge from damage due to unforeseen circumstances, and the prevention of widespread breakdown in production, sales, or service operations. Consequently, when conditions beyond control arise which threaten the safety of the employees, or a cessation of operations, or serious damage to the employer's property, any manual or other normally nonexempt work performed in an effort to prevent such results is considered exempt work and is not included in computing the percentage limitation on nonexempt work.

(b) The rule in paragraph (a) of this section is not applicable, however, to nonexempt work arising out of occurrences which are not beyond control or for which the employer can reasonably provide in the normal course of business.

(c) A few illustrations may be helpful in distinguishing routine work performed as a result of real emergencies of the kind for which no provision can practicably be made by the employer in advance of their occurrence and routine work which is not in this category. It is obvious that a mine superintendent who pitches in after an explosion and digs out the men who are trapped in the mine is still a bona fide executive during that week. On the other hand, the manager of a cleaning establishment who personally performs the cleaning operations on expensive garments because he fears damage to the fabrics if he allows his subordinates to handle them is not performing ``emergency'' work of the kind which can be considered exempt. Nor is the manager of a department in a retail store performing exempt work when he personally waits on a special or impatient customer because he fears the loss of the sale or the customer's goodwill if he allows a salesperson to serve him. The performance of nonexempt work by executives during inventory-taking, during other periods of heavy workload, or the handling of rush orders are the kinds of activities which the percentage tolerances are intended to cover. For example, pitching in on the production line in a canning plant during seasonal operations is not exempt ``emergency'' work even if the objective is to keep the food from spoiling. Similarly, pitching in behind the sales counter in a retail store during special sales or during Christmas or Easter or other peak sales periods is not ``emergency'' work, even if the objective is to improve customer service and the store's sales record. Maintenance work is not emergency work even if performed at night or during weekends. Relieving subordinates during rest or vacation periods

cannot be considered in the nature of ``emergency'' work since the need for replacements can be anticipated. Whether replacing the subordinate at the workbench, or production line, or sales counter during the first day or partial day of an illness would be considered exempt emergency work would depend upon the circumstances in the particular case. Such factors as the size of the establishment and of the executive's department, the nature of the industry, the consequences that would flow from the failure to replace the ailing employee immediately, and the feasibility of filling the employee's place promptly would all have to be weighed.

(d) All the regular cleaning up around machinery, even when necessary to prevent fire or explosion, is not ``emergency'' work. However, the removal by an executive of dirt or obstructions constituting a hazard to life or property need not be included in computing the percentage limitation if it is not reasonably practicable for anyone but the supervisor to perform the work and it is the kind of ``emergency'' which has not been recurring. The occasional performance of repair work in case of a breakdown of machinery, or the collapse of a display rack, or damage to or exceptional disarray of merchandise caused by accident or a customer's carelessness may be considered exempt work if the breakdown is one which the employer cannot reasonably anticipate. However, recurring breakdowns or disarrays requiring frequent attention, such as that of an old belt or machine which breaks down repeatedly or merchandise displays constantly requiring re-sorting or straightening, are the kind for which provision could reasonably be made and repair of which must be considered as nonexempt.

Sec. 541.111 Nonexempt work generally.

(a) As indicated in Sec. 541.101 the term ``nonexempt work,'' as used in this subpart, includes all work other than that described in Sec. 541.1 (a) through (d) and the activities directly and closely related to such work.

(b) Nonexempt work is easily identifiable where, as in the usual case, it consists of work of the same nature as that performed by the nonexempt subordinates of the ``executive.'' It is more difficult to identify in cases where supervisory employees spend a significant amount of time in activities not performed by any of their subordinates and not consisting of actual supervision and management. In such cases careful analysis of the employee's duties with reference to the phrase ``directly and closely related to the performance of the work described in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this section'' will usually be necessary in arriving at a determination.

Sec. 541.115 Working foremen.

(a) The primary purpose of the exclusionary language placing a limitation on the amount of nonexempt work is to distinguish between the bona fide executive and the ``working'' foreman or ``working'' supervisor who regularly performs ``production'' work or other work which is unrelated or only remotely related to his supervisory activities. (The term ``working'' foreman is used in this subpart in the sense indicated in the text and should not be construed to mean only one who performs work similar to that performed by his subordinates.)

(b) One type of working foreman or working supervisor most commonly found in industry works alongside his subordinates. Such employees,

sometimes known as strawbosses, or gang or group leaders perform the same kind of work as that performed by their subordinates, and also carry on supervisory functions. Clearly, the work of the same nature as that performed by the employees' subordinates must be counted as nonexempt work and if the amount of such work performed is substantial the exemption does not apply. (``Substantial,'' as used in this section, means more than 20 percent. See discussion of the 20-percent limitation on nonexempt work in Sec. 541.112.) A foreman in a dress shop, for example, who operates a sewing machine to produce the product is performing clearly nonexempt work. However, this should not be confused with the operation of a sewing machine by a foreman to instruct his subordinates in the making of a new product, such as a garment, before it goes into production.

(c) Another type of working foreman or working supervisor who cannot be classed as a bona fide executive is one who spends a substantial amount of time in work which, although not performed by his own subordinates, consists of ordinary production work or other routine, recurrent, repetitive tasks which are a regular part of his duties. Such an employee is in effect holding a dual job. He may be, for example, a combination foreman-production worker, supervisor-clerk, or foreman combined with some other skilled or unskilled occupation. His non-supervisory duties in such instances are unrelated to anything he must do to supervise the employees under him or to manage the department. They are in many instances mere ``fill-in'' tasks performed because the job does not involve sufficient executive duties to occupy an employee's full time. In other instances the non-supervisory, non-managerial duties may be the principal ones and the supervisory or managerial duties are subordinate and are assigned to the particular employee because it is more convenient to rest the responsibility for the first line of supervision in the hands of the person who performs these other duties. Typical of employees in dual jobs which may involve a substantial amount of nonexempt work are:

(1) Foremen or supervisors who also perform one or more of the ``production'' or ``operating'' functions, though no other employees in the plant perform such work. An example of this kind of employee is the foreman in a millinery or garment plant who is also the cutter, or the foreman in a garment factory who operates a multiple-needle machine not requiring a full-time operator;

(2) Foremen or supervisors who have as a regular part of their duties the adjustment, repair, or maintenance of machinery or equipment. Examples in this category are the foreman-fixer in the hosiery industry who devotes a considerable amount of time to making adjustments and repairs to the machines of his subordinates, or the planer-mill foreman who is also the ``machine man'' who repairs the machines and grinds the knives;

(3) Foremen or supervisors who perform clerical work other than the maintenance of the time and production records of their subordinates; for example, the foreman of the shipping room who makes out the bills of lading and other shipping records, the warehouse foreman who also acts as inventory clerk, the head shipper who also has charge of a finished goods stock room, assisting in placing goods on shelves and keeping perpetual inventory records, or the office manager, head bookkeeper, or chief clerk who performs routine bookkeeping. There is no doubt that the head bookkeeper, for example, who spends a substantial amount of his time keeping books of the same general nature as those kept by the other bookkeepers, even though his books are confidential in nature or cover different transactions from the books maintained by the under

bookkeepers, is not primarily an executive employee and should not be so considered.

Sec. 541.116 Trainees, executive.

The exemption is applicable to an employee employed in a bona fide executive capacity and does not include employees training to become executives and not actually performing the duties of an executive.

Sec. 541.2 Administrative.

The term employee employed in a bona fide * * * administrative * * * capacity in section 13(a)(1) of the Act shall mean any employee:

(a) Whose primary duty consists of either:

(1) The performance of office or non-manual work directly related to management policies or general business operations of his employer or his employer's customers, or

(2) The performance of functions in the administration of a school system, or educational establishment or institution, or of a department or subdivision thereof, in work directly related to the academic instruction or training carried on therein; and

(b) Who customarily and regularly exercises discretion and independent judgment; and

(c)(1) Who regularly and directly assists a proprietor, or an employee employed in a bona fide executive or administrative capacity (as such terms are defined in the regulations of this subpart), or

(2) Who performs under only general supervision work along specialized or technical lines requiring special training, experience, or knowledge, or

(3) Who executes under only general supervision special assignments and tasks;

Sec. 541.201 Types of administrative employees.

(a) Three types of employees are described in Sec. 541.2(c) who, if they meet the other tests in Sec. 541.2, qualify for exemption as ``administrative'' employees.

(1) Executive and administrative assistants. The first type is the assistant to a proprietor or to an executive or administrative employee. In modern industrial practice there has been a steady and increasing use of persons who assist an executive in the performance of his duties without themselves having executive authority. Typical titles of persons in this group are executive assistant to the president, confidential assistant, executive secretary, assistant to the general manager, administrative assistant and, in retail or service establishments, assistant manager and assistant buyer. Generally speaking, such assistants are found in large establishments where the official assisted has duties of such scope and which require so much attention that the work of personal scrutiny, correspondence, and interviews must be delegated.

(2) Staff employees. (i) Employees included in the second alternative in the definition are those who can be described as staff rather than line employees, or as functional rather than departmental heads. They include among others employees who act as advisory specialists to the

management. Typical examples of such advisory specialists are tax experts, insurance experts, sales research experts, wage-rate analysts, investment consultants, foreign exchange consultants, and statisticians.

(ii) Also included are persons who are in charge of a so-called functional department, which may frequently be a one-man department. Typical examples of such employees are credit managers, purchasing agents, buyers, safety directors, personnel directors, and labor relations directors.

(3) Those who perform special assignments. (i) The third group consists of persons who perform special assignments. Among them are to be found a number of persons whose work is performed away from the employer's place of business. Typical titles of such persons are lease buyers, field representatives of utility companies, location managers of motion picture companies, and district gaugers for oil companies. It should be particularly noted that this is a field which is rife with honorific titles that do not adequately portray the nature of the employee's duties. The field representative of a utility company, for example, may be a ``glorified serviceman.''

(ii) This classification also includes employees whose special assignments are performed entirely or partly inside their employer's place of business. Examples are special organization planners, customers' brokers in stock exchange firms, so-called account executives in advertising firms and contact or promotion men of various types.

(b) Job titles insufficient as yardsticks. (1) The employees for whom exemption is sought under the term ``administrative'' have extremely diverse functions and a wide variety of titles. A title alone is of little or no assistance in determining the true importance of an employee to the employer or his exempt or nonexempt status under the regulations in subpart A of this part. Titles can be had cheaply and are of no determinative value. Thus, while there are supervisors of production control (whose decisions affect the welfare of large numbers of employees) who qualify for exemption under section 13(a)(1), it is not hard to call a rate setter (whose functions are limited to timing certain operations and jotting down times on a standardized form) a ``methods engineer'' or a ``production-control supervisor.''

(2) Many more examples could be cited to show that titles are insufficient as yardsticks. As has been indicated previously, the exempt or nonexempt status of any particular employee must be determined on the basis of whether his duties, responsibilities, and salary meet all the requirements of the appropriate section of the regulations in subpart A of this part.

(c) Individuals engaged in the overall academic administration of an elementary or secondary school system include the superintendent or other head of the system and those of his assistants whose duties are primarily concerned with administration of such matters as curriculum, quality and methods of instructing, measuring and testing the learning potential and achievement of students, establishing and maintaining academic and grading standards, and other aspects of the teaching program. In individual school establishments those engaged in overall academic administration include the principal and the vice principals who are responsible for the operation of the school. Other employees engaged in academic administration are such department heads as the heads of the mathematics department, the English department, the foreign language department, the manual crafts department, and the like. Institutions of higher education have similar organizational structure, although in many cases somewhat more complex.

Sec. 541.205 Directly related to management policies or general business operations.

(a) The phrase ``directly related to management policies or general business operations of his employer or his employer's customers'' describes those types of activities relating to the administrative operations of a business as distinguished from ``production'' or, in a retail or service establishment, ``sales'' work. In addition to describing the types of activities, the phrase limits the exemption to persons who perform work of substantial importance to the management or operation of the business of his employer or his employer's customers.

(b) The administrative operations of the business include the work performed by so-called white-collar employees engaged in ``servicing'' a business as, for, example, advising the management, planning, negotiating, representing the company, purchasing, promoting sales, and business research and control. An employee performing such work is engaged in activities relating to the administrative operations of the business notwithstanding that he is employed as an administrative assistant to an executive in the production department of the business.

(c) As used to describe work of substantial importance to the management or operation of the business, the phrase ``directly related to management policies or general business operations'' is not limited to persons who participate in the formulation of management policies or in the operation of the business as a whole. Employees whose work is ``directly related'' to management policies or to general business operations include those work affects policy or whose responsibility it is to execute or carry it out. The phrase also includes a wide variety of persons who either carry out major assignments in conducting the operations of the business, or whose work affects business operations to a substantial degree, even though their assignments are tasks related to the operation of a particular segment of the business.

(1) It is not possible to lay down specific rules that will indicate the precise point at which work becomes of substantial importance to the management or operation of a business. It should be clear that the cashier of a bank performs work at a responsible level and may therefore be said to be performing work directly related to management policies or general business operations. On the other hand, the bank teller does not. Likewise it is clear that bookkeepers, secretaries, and clerks of various kinds hold the run-of-the-mine positions in any ordinary business and are not performing work directly related to management policies or general business operations. On the other hand, a tax consultant employed either by an individual company or by a firm of consultants is ordinarily doing work of substantial importance to the management or operation of a business.

(2) An employee performing routine clerical duties obviously is not performing work of substantial importance to the management or operation of the business even though he may exercise some measure of discretion and judgment as to the manner in which he performs his clerical tasks. A messenger boy who is entrusted with carrying large sums of money or securities cannot be said to be doing work of importance to the business even though serious consequences may flow from his neglect. An employee operating very expensive equipment may cause serious loss to his employer by the improper performance of his duties. An inspector, such as, for example, an inspector for an insurance company, may cause loss to his employer by the failure to perform his job properly. But such employees,

obviously, are not performing work of such substantial importance to the management or operation of the business that it can be said to be ``directly related to management policies or general business operations'' as that phrase is used in Sec. 541.2.

(3) Some firms employ persons whom they describe as ``statisticians.'' If all such a person does, in effect, is to tabulate data, he is clearly not exempt. However, if such an employee makes analyses of data and draws conclusions which are important to the determination of, or which, in fact, determine financial, merchandising, or other policy, clearly he is doing work directly related to management policies or general business operations. Similarly, a personnel employee may be a clerk at a hiring window of a plant, or he may be a man who determines or effects personnel policies affecting all the workers in the establishment. In the latter case, he is clearly doing work directly related to management policies or general business operations. These examples illustrate the two extremes. In each case, between these extreme types there are many employees whose work may be of substantial importance to the management or operation of the business, depending upon the particular facts.

(4) Another example of an employee whose work may be important to the welfare of the business is a buyer of a particular article or equipment in an industrial plant or personnel commonly called assistant buyers in retail or service establishments. Where such work is of substantial importance to the management or operation of the business, even though it may be limited to purchasing for a particular department of the business, it is directly related to management policies or general business operations.

(5) The test of ``directly related to management policies or general business operations'' is also met by many persons employed as advisory specialists and consultants of various kinds, credit managers, safety directors, claim agents and adjusters, wage-rate analysts, tax experts, account executives of advertising agencies, customers' brokers in stock exchange firms, promotion men, and many others.

(6) It should be noted in this connection that an employer's volume of activities may make it necessary to employ a number of employees in some of these categories. The fact that there are a number of other employees of the same employer carrying out assignments of the same relative importance or performing identical work does not affect the determination of whether they meet this test so long as the work of each such employee is of substantial importance to the management or operation of the business.

(7) In the data processing field some firms employ persons described as systems analysts and computer programmers. If such employees are concerned with the planning, scheduling, and coordination of activities which are required to develop systems for processing data to obtain solutions to complex business, scientific, or engineering problems of his employer or his employer's customers, he is clearly doing work directly related to management policies or general business operations.

(d) Under Sec. 541.2 the ``management policies or general business operations'' may be those of the employer or the employer's customers. For example, many bona fide administrative employees perform important functions as advisers and consultants but are employed by a concern engaged in furnishing such services for a fee. Typical instances are tax experts, labor relations consultants, financial consultants, systems analysts, or resident buyers. Such employees, if they meet the other requirements of Sec. 541.2, qualify for exemption regardless of whether the management policies or general business operations to which their

work is directly related are those of their employer's clients or customers or those of their employer.

Sec. 541.208 Directly and closely related.

(a) As indicated in Sec. 541.202, work which is directly and closely related to the performance of the work described in Sec. 541.2 is considered exempt work. Some illustrations may be helpful in clarifying the differences between such work and work which is unrelated or only remotely related to the work described in Sec. 541.2.

(b)(1) For purposes of illustration, the case of a high-salaried management consultant about whose exempt status as an administrative employee there is no doubt will be assumed. The particular employee is employed by a firm of consultants and performs work in which he customarily and regularly exercises discretion and independent judgment. The work consists primarily of analyzing, and recommending changes in, the business operations of his employer's client. This work falls in the category of exempt work described in Sec. 541.2.

(2) In the course of performing that work, the consultant makes extensive notes recording the flow of work and materials through the office and plant of the client. Standing alone or separated from the primary duty such note making would be routine in nature. However, this is work without which the more important work cannot be performed properly. It is ``directly and closely related'' to the administrative work and is therefore exempt work. Upon his return to the office of his employer the consultant personally types his report and draws, first in rough and then in final form, a proposed table of organization to be submitted with it. Although all this work may not be essential to the performance of his more important work, it is all directly and closely related to that work and should be considered exempt. While it is possible to assign the typing and final drafting to nonexempt employees and in fact it is frequently the practice to do so, it is not required as a condition of exemption that it be so delegated.

(3) Finally, if because this particular employee has a special skill in such work, he also drafts tables or organization proposed by other consultants, he would then be performing routine work wholly unrelated, or at best only remotely related, to his more important work. Under such conditions, the drafting is nonexempt.

(c) Another illustration is the credit manager who makes and administers the credit policy of his employer. Establishing credit limits for customers and authorizing the shipment of orders on credit, including the decisions to exceed or otherwise vary these limits in the case of particular customers, would be exempt work of the kind specifically described in Sec. 541.2. Work which is directly and closely related to these exempt duties may include such activities as checking the status of accounts to determine whether the credit limit would be exceeded by the shipment of a new order, removing credit reports from the files for analysis and writing letters giving credit data and experience to other employers or credit agencies. On the other hand, any general office or bookkeeping work is nonexempt work. For instance, posting to the accounts receivable ledger would be only remotely related to his administrative work and must be considered nonexempt.

(d) One phase of the work of an administrative assistant to a bona fide executive or administrative employee provides another illustration. The work of determining whether to answer correspondence personally, call it to his superior's attention, or route it to someone else for reply

requires the exercise of discretion and independent judgment and is exempt work of the kind described in Sec. 541.2. Opening the mail for the purpose of reading it to make the decisions indicated will be directly and closely related to the administrative work described. However, merely opening mail and placing it unread before his superior or some other person would be related only remotely, if at all, to any work requiring the exercise of discretion and independent judgment.

(e) The following additional examples may also be of value in applying these principles. A traffic manager is employed to handle the company's transportation problems. The exempt work performed by such an employee would include planning the most economical and quickest routes for shipping merchandise to and from the plant, contracting for common-carrier and other transportation facilities, negotiating with carriers for adjustments for damages to merchandise in transit and making the necessary rearrangements resulting from delays, damages, or irregularities in transit. This employee may also spend part of his time taking city orders (for local deliveries) over the telephone. The order-taking is a routine function not directly and closely related to the exempt work and must be considered nonexempt.

(f) An office manager who does not supervise two or more employees would not meet the requirements for exemption as an executive employee but may possibly qualify for exemption as an administrative employee. Such an employee may perform administrative duties, such as the executive of the employer's credit policy, the management of the company's traffic, purchasing, and other responsible office work requiring the customary and regular exercise of discretion and judgment, which are clearly exempt. On the other hand, this office manager may perform all the bookkeeping, prepare the confidential or regular payrolls, and send out monthly statements of account. These latter activities are not directly and closely related to the exempt functions and are not exempt.

Sec. 541.210 Trainees, administrative.

The exemption is applicable to an employee employed in a bona fide administrative capacity and does not include employees training for employment in an administrative capacity who are not actually performing the duties of an administrative employee.