

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Labor Commissioner Returns \$363,625 in Unpaid Wages to Six Car Wash Workers in Los Angeles

Los Angeles—California Labor Commissioner Julie A. Su today announced that six car wash workers were paid \$363,625 in wages owed to them by two car wash operators in the Los Angeles area. The workers were shorted on minimum wages and overtime, and were denied rest and meal breaks as required by law.

The Labor Commissioner's Office determined that the workers, who had been employed an average of six years, worked 10 to 12 hours each day and were paid only \$3.50 to \$5.40 per hour, well below the state's minimum wage. Three worked at National Car Wash, 9001 National Blvd. in Los Angeles, and three worked at Century Car Wash, 4700 West Century Blvd. in Inglewood. None of the workers were provided their final paychecks at the time of separation.

"Car wash workers frequently are subjected to wage theft, and my office has focused its efforts on holding employers accountable and returning owed wages to workers," said Labor Commissioner Julie A. Su. "This case shows that when workers come forward and report workplace violations, they can win back the wages they were owed, recover additional penalties, and expose illegal practices."

Investigators also found that one worker was ordered to sign blank sheets of paper before receiving his paycheck -- a practice used to falsify records -- and forced to "volunteer" his time on slow days without pay. Another worker said his boss told him that rest periods did not exist, and paid him only in tips on slow days.

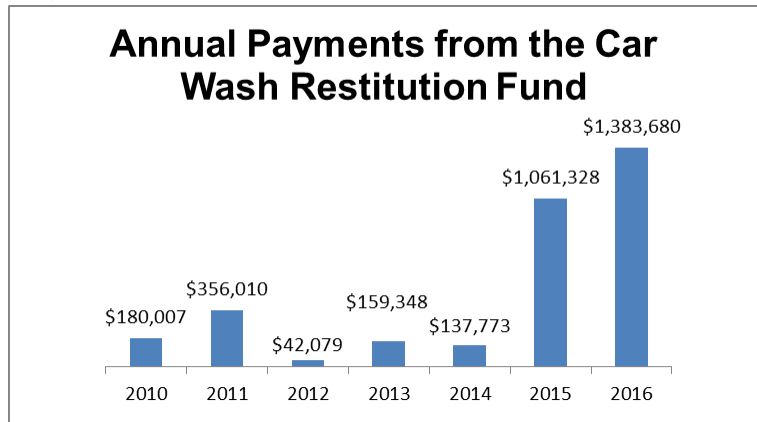


Five of the six car wash workers paid display their checks, with staff from the Long Beach Labor Commissioner's Office

The workers were paid \$140,912 in back wages, \$98,506 in liquidated damages, \$72,428 in interest, \$36,134 in rest and meal break penalties and \$15,645 in waiting time penalties, for a total of \$363,625.

The funds paid to the workers were provided by the Car Wash Worker Restitution Fund, which is funded by a portion of the registration fees paid by car wash owners.

[Procedures for paying car wash workers from the fund](#) are specified by regulation, and require that collection attempts to recover the wages, penalties or other related damages are made and verified. The Labor Commissioner's Office over the past three years paid 112 car wash workers more than \$2.5 million from the fund.



The Department of Industrial Relations' Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, also known as the [Labor Commissioner's Office](#), inspects workplaces for wage and hour violations, adjudicates wage claims, investigates retaliation complaints, issues licenses and registrations for businesses, enforces prevailing wage rates and apprenticeship standards in public works projects, and educates the public on labor laws. Its [Wage Theft is a Crime](#) multilingual public awareness campaign was launched in 2014 to help inform workers of their rights and employers of their responsibilities.

Members of the press may contact Paola Laverde or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), 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 general inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.