



WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Fact Sheet #66: The Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA)

October 2023

This fact sheet provides general information concerning DBRA.

Coverage

DBRA requires payment of prevailing wages on federally funded or assisted construction projects.

The Davis-Bacon Act applies to each federal government or District of Columbia contract in excess of \$2,000 for the construction, alteration, or repair (including painting and decorating) of public buildings or public works. Many federal laws that authorize federal assistance for construction through grants, loans, loan guarantees, insurance, and other methods are Davis-Bacon "Related Acts." The "Related Acts" include provisions that apply Davis-Bacon labor standards to most federally assisted construction. Examples of "Related Acts" include the Federal-Aid Highway Acts, the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

Basic Provisions/Requirements

Contractors must pay laborers and mechanics working on the site of the work at least the locally prevailing wages (including fringe benefits), listed in the Davis-Bacon wage determination applicable to the contract, for the work performed. Davis-Bacon labor standards clauses must be included in covered contracts.

The Davis-Bacon "prevailing wage" is the combination of the basic hourly rate and any fringe benefits listed in a Davis-Bacon wage determination. The contractor's obligation to pay at least the prevailing wage listed in the applicable wage determination can be met by paying each laborer and mechanic the applicable prevailing wage entirely as cash wages or by a combination of cash wages and employer-provided bona fide fringe benefits. Prevailing wages, including fringe benefits, must be paid for all hours worked on the site of the work.

Apprentices may be paid less than the rates listed in the applicable wage determination only when they are individually registered in an apprenticeship program registered with the Department of Labor or with a state apprenticeship agency recognized by the Department, and the terms of the apprenticeship program are met.

Contractors are required to pay covered workers weekly and submit weekly certified payroll records to the contracting agency. They are also required to post the applicable Davis-Bacon wage determination and the Davis-Bacon poster (WH-1321) on the work site in a prominent and accessible place where they

can be easily seen by the workers.

Davis-Bacon Wage Determinations

Davis-Bacon wage determinations are published on the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) website for contracting agencies to include them into covered contracts. The “prevailing wages” are determined based on wages paid to various classes of laborers and mechanics employed on specific types of construction projects in an area. Guidance on determining the type of construction, and when multiple wage determinations are applicable to a project, is provided in All Agency Memoranda 130, 131 and 236.

Retaliation Is Prohibited

Retaliation is prohibited against any worker or job applicant for engaging in protected activities. Examples of protected include, but are not limited to, making a complaint to a manager, contractor, contracting agency, or WHD; cooperating in a WHD investigation; requesting payment of wages; refusing to return back wages to the contractor; complaints by a third party on behalf of a worker; consulting with WHD staff; informing another worker about their rights under the DBRA; and testifying at a hearing or trial.

WHD will notify contractors of violation findings and direct them to provide appropriate make whole relief to affected worker(s) and job applicant(s) or take appropriate remedial action, or both, where retaliation has been found to have occurred. Engaging in prohibited retaliation may also be grounds for debarment.

Penalties/Sanctions and Appeals

Contract payments may be withheld in sufficient amounts to satisfy liabilities of the contractor for unpaid wages, and for liquidated damages for overtime violations under the [Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act \(CWHSSA\)](#). In addition, violations of the Davis-Bacon labor standards may be grounds for contract termination, contractor liability for any resulting costs to the government, and debarment from future contracts for a period of three years.

Contractors may challenge the Wage and Hour Division’s determinations of violations and debarment before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). Interested parties may appeal ALJ decisions to the Department’s Administrative Review Board (ARB). Final ARB decisions may be appealed to and are enforceable through the federal courts.

Typical Compliance Issues

Compliance issues that frequently arise on DBRA projects include:

- Misclassification of laborers and mechanics.
- Failure to pay full prevailing wage, including fringe benefits, for all hours worked (including overtime hours).
- Incomplete or inaccurate recordkeeping, such as not counting all hours worked or not recording hours worked in each classification by an individual who worked in two or more classifications during a day.
- Failure to maintain a copy of the bona fide apprenticeship program and individual registration documents for apprentices.
- Failure to submit certified payrolls weekly.
- Failure to post the Davis- Bacon poster and applicable wage determination at the work site.

Relation to State, Local, and Other Federal Laws

The Copeland "Anti-Kickback" Act prohibits contractors from in any way inducing an employee to give up any part of the compensation to which they are entitled and requires contractors to submit a weekly statement of the wages paid to each worker performing DBRA-covered work.

Contractors on projects subject to DBRA labor standards may also be subject to additional prevailing wage and overtime pay requirements under State (and local) laws. Also, overtime pay requirements under CWHSSA and the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) may apply.

Under [Reorganization Plan No. 14 of 1950](#), (5 U.S.C. Appendix 1), the federal contracting or assistance-administering agencies have day-to-day responsibility for administration and enforcement of the Davis-Bacon labor standards provisions and, in order to promote consistent and effective enforcement, the Department of Labor has regulatory and oversight authority, including the authority to investigate compliance.

Where to Obtain Additional Information

For additional information, visit our [Wage and Hour Division Website](#):

<http://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd> and/or call our toll-free information and helpline, available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in your time zone, 1-866-4USWAGE (1-866-487-9243).

This publication is for general information and is not to be considered in the same light as official statements of position contained in the regulations.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

White House

Benefits.gov

Coronavirus Resources

Disaster Recovery Assistance Office of Inspector General

DisasterAssistance.gov

USA.gov

Notification of EEO ViolationsEmergency Accountability Status Link

No Fear Act Data

U.S. Office of Special Counsel

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