

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

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, and insurance 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 and subcontractors must pay [laborers and mechanics](#) employed directly upon the [site of the work](#) at least the locally prevailing wages (including fringe benefits), listed in the Davis-Bacon wage determination in 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 contract 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 on all hours worked on the site of the work.

Apprentices or trainees may be employed at less than the rates listed in the contract wage determination only when they are in an apprenticeship program registered with the Department of Labor or with a state apprenticeship agency recognized by the Department.

Contractors and subcontractors 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 with the [Davis-Bacon poster \(WH-1321\)](#) on the job 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 at <https://sam.gov/content/wage-determinations> for contracting agencies to incorporate 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 is provided in All Agency Memoranda Nos. [130](#), [131](#), and [236](#).

Penalties/Sanctions and Appeals

Contract payments may be withheld in sufficient amounts to satisfy liabilities for underpayment of 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 contract clauses may be grounds for contract termination, contractor liability for any resulting costs to the government and debarment from future contracts for a period up to three years.

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

Typical Problems

(1) Misclassification of laborers and mechanics. (2) Failure to pay full prevailing wage, including fringe benefits, for all hours worked (including overtime hours). (3) Inadequate recordkeeping, such as not counting all hours worked or not recording hours worked by an individual in two or more classifications during a day. (4) Failure of to maintain a copy of bona fide apprenticeship program and individual registration documents for apprentices. (5) Failure to submit certified payrolls weekly. (6) Failure to post the Davis-Bacon poster and applicable wage determination.

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 he or she is entitled under his or her contract of employment, and requires contractors to submit a weekly statement of the wages paid to each employee 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 work pay requirements under CWHSSA) and the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) may apply.

Under [Reorganization Plan No. 14 of 1950](#), (5 U.S.C.A. Appendix), 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.wagehour.dol.gov> 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.

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