



BUREAU OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES

Important Information Regarding Revisions to Construction Industry Survey March, 2010

Last year, Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian asked the Prevailing Wage Advisory Committee and the Oregon Employment Department to review the annual construction industry wage survey (used to determine prevailing wage rates on public works projects) and make recommendations to increase data validity and to minimize the burden on contractors of reporting their data. The Commissioner initiated the review process after hearing a number of concerns about the efficacy and methodology of the previous survey and in an effort to make improvements for future surveys.

Based on the recommendations received in late 2009 from the Prevailing Wage Advisory Committee, comprised equally of contractor and labor representatives, and the Oregon Employment Department, which conducts the survey, the Commissioner is making the following revisions to the survey methodology and process:

CHANGES IN SURVEY METHODOLOGY

More data on the number of hours worked will be collected. The current “peak week” survey methodology will be replaced by surveying one specified week in each of four quarters over a year’s period of time (a total of four weeks).

If you have employees that worked on non-residential construction projects in Oregon, you will be sent a survey in July of this year, asking you to provide information for the weeks that include each of the following dates:

November 12, 2009
February 12, 2010
May 12, 2010
August 12, 2010

The survey will be due September 2, 2010. Rates based on this survey data will be published January 1, 2011.

As with prior surveys, you may wish to prepare for the survey by having the following information available for each of the four weeks identified above:

- The number of hours worked by each employee by occupation and region (See http://www.oregon.gov/BOLI/WHD/PWR/Jan10/regions_map.pdf for map of regions);
- The basic hourly wage rate paid to each worker by occupation and region; and
- The amount of fringe benefits (e.g., health and welfare, pension, holiday and vacation, apprentice training) paid to each worker.

Please note that the weeks that include these reference days (November 12, February 12, May 12, and August 12) will be used in all future surveys.

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Unnecessary data reporting will be eliminated. Beginning in 2011, trades in regions in which collectively bargained rates have been determined to prevail for three or more consecutive years will not be surveyed for another three years. In addition, changes to the survey form intended to streamline data reporting are being made.

CHANGES TO THE SURVEY FORM AND PROCESS

The following changes are being made to the survey form to reduce confusion and the misreporting of data:

- The definitions of “Journeyman” and “Sub-Journey” currently used in the survey will be clarified as follows:

Skilled Craftsman/Journeyman: A fully skilled craftsman who can work independently in the trade or occupation. Generally, a skilled craftsman has a minimum of four years of verifiable trade-specific experience or has completed a state certified apprenticeship program in the applicable trade. Skilled craftsmen/journeymen are licensed where licensing is required.

Entry-level Craftsman/Sub-Journeyman: A worker who cannot work independently in the trade or occupation. Generally, an entry-level craftsman/sub-journeyman has fewer than four years of trade-specific experience and has not completed a state certified apprenticeship program in the applicable trade.

- Per diem and zone pay will be excluded from the basic hourly wage rates reported.
- Designating the “construction type” (“building” or “heavy/highway”) for the hours reported on the survey will no longer be required.

The agency will continue to work with the Prevailing Wage Advisory Committee and the Oregon Employment Department to clarify the reporting of appropriate fringe benefit information, establish survey auditing/validation processes, and explore the possibility of web-based reporting systems.

For those trades/regions in which collectively bargained rates were determined to not prevail in 2009, until sufficient survey data can be collected to determine current wage rates for the trades/regions, the 2009 wage rates will be adjusted in 2010 using construction industry wage data reported in the Employment Cost Index published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. These amended rates will be published on April 1, 2010.

More detailed information regarding the annual construction industry survey review process, committee recommendations, and Employment Cost Index can be found at: www.oregon.gov/BOLI/WHD/PWR/PWR_Committee.shtml.

The Bureau looks forward to the improved and updated survey process that will enable the collection of better data and ease the reporting burden. If you have questions or comments regarding the new methodology, or how to complete a 2010 Construction Industry Occupational Wage Survey, please call 503-947-1586.