



News Release

U.S. Department of Labor | April 10, 2019

U.S. Department of Labor Continues Compliance Assistance During Ongoing Hurricane Recovery Efforts on U.S. Virgin Islands

GUAYNABO, PR – U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division (WHD) representatives are working in St. Croix and St. Thomas to provide compliance assistance and education for employers, and to investigate payroll practices related to ongoing recovery efforts following Hurricanes Maria and Irma.

WHD will review employers' compliance with the federal labor statutes including the [McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act](#) (SCA), the [Davis-Bacon and Related Acts](#) (DBRA), [Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act](#) (CWHSSA), and the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) (FLSA). Investigators will determine whether employers are paying employees in compliance with the requirements of those laws, covering both private work and construction and/or services taking place as part of federally funded recovery. Common violations that investigators will watch for include failure to pay employees for all the hours they have worked, failing to pay workers minimum wage or overtime after misclassifying them as independent contractors, and failing to pay required wages and fringe benefits under federal service and construction contracts.

These efforts are a continuation of WHD's education and enforcement work in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Through Fiscal Year 2018 and January 2019, the agency concluded 17 investigations in USVI that recovered \$1,313,763 in back wages for 262 employees of contractors working on recovery efforts. WHD representatives also participated in more than 20 outreach events during this time. These included training and information sessions with employees, employers, and officials from local and federal agencies.

"The U.S. Department of Labor continues working to ensure that employees performing hurricane recovery work have received and will receive the wages and benefits they have legally earned, and that employers compete on a level playing field," said Wage and Hour Division Caribbean District Director José Vazquez. "We encourage employees and employers to contact us. Department officials are available to answer any questions they may have."

Employees and employers who would like compliance information, who wish to meet with a Wage and Hour representative, have questions or concerns, or wish to file a [complaint](#), should contact WHD's Caribbean District Office at 787-775-1947 or 1-866-4-USWAGE, or by [email](#). All contacts are confidential. Individuals seeking enforcement and compliance information should contact WHD as soon as possible. Employers who discover overtime or minimum wage violations may self-report and

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resolve those violations without litigation through the PAID program. Information is also available at <https://www.dol.gov/whd> including a [search tool](#) for workers who may be owed back wages collected by WHD.

The Office of Compliance Assistance (OCI) – housed within the Department of Labor's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy – fosters a compliance assistance culture within the Department designed to complement its ongoing enforcement efforts. OCI focuses on helping enforcement agencies more effectively use online resources to deliver information and compliance assistance to help the American people. In August 2018, OCI launched [Worker.gov](#) and [Employer.gov](#) to provide information about workers' rights and the responsibilities of job creators toward their workers.

Agency

Wage and Hour Division

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Media Contact: Ted Fitzgerald

Phone Number

[617-565-2075](tel:617-565-2075)

Email

fitzgerald.edmund@dol.gov

Media Contact: James C. Lally

Phone Number

[617-565-2074](tel:617-565-2074)

Email

lally.james.c@dol.gov

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