

CHAPTER 177

MINIMUM WAGES

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177.01 DUTIES OF MINIMUM WAGE COMMISSION TRANSFERRED. On and after the first day of June, 1921, the powers and duties then by law vested in and imposed upon the minimum wage commission shall be exercised and performed by the industrial commission and its subordinates, as a part of the functions of the division of women and children in the department of labor and industry.

[1921 c. 84 s. 1] (4210)

177.02 DEFINITIONS. Subdivision 1. **Words, terms, and phrases.** Unless the language or context clearly indicates that a different meaning is intended, the following words, terms, and phrases, for the purposes of this chapter, shall be given the meanings subjoined to them.

Subd. 2. **Living wage, living wages, minimum wage, minimum wages.** The terms "living wage" or "living wages" mean wages sufficient to maintain the worker in health and supply him with the necessary comforts and conditions of reasonable life. Where the words "minimum wage" or "minimum wages" are used they shall have the same meaning as "living wage" or "living wages."

Subd. 3. **Rate or rates.** The terms "rate" or "rates" mean rate or rates of wages.

Subd. 4. **Commission.** The term "commission" means the industrial commission.

Subd. 5. **Woman.** The term "woman" means a person of the female sex 18 years of age or over.

Subd. 6. **Minor.** The term "minor" means a male person under the age of 21 years or a female person under the age of 18 years.

The term "minor," for the purpose of the investigation of wages paid to women and minors in any occupation in this state and for providing minimum wages to be paid to women and minors, means any person, male or female, under the age of 21 years.

Subd. 7. **Learner, apprentice.** The terms "learner" and "apprentice" may mean either a woman or a minor.

Subd. 8. **Worker, employee.** The terms "worker" or "employee" may mean a woman, a minor, a learner, or an apprentice who is employed for wages.

Subd. 9. **Occupation.** The term "occupation" means any business, industry, trade, or branch of a trade in which women or minors are employed.

[1913 c. 547 ss. 2, 20; 1937 c. 79 s. 1] (4214, 4232)

177.03 TO INVESTIGATE WAGES OF WOMEN AND MINORS. The commission may at its discretion investigate the wages paid to women and minors in any occupation in this state. At the request of not less than 100 persons engaged in any occupation in which women and minors are employed, the commission shall forthwith make such investigation as herein provided.

[1913 c. 547 s. 2; 1937 c. 79 s. 1] (4214)

177.04 DUTIES OF EMPLOYERS; REGISTER. Every employer of women and minors shall keep a register of the names and addresses of and wages paid to all women and minors employed by him, together with the number of hours they are employed per day or per week; and every such employer shall on request permit the commission, or any of its members or agents, to inspect such register.

[1913 c. 547 s. 3] (4215)

177.05 PUBLIC HEARINGS; WITNESSES. The commission shall specify times to hold public hearings at which employers, employees, or other interested persons may appear and give testimony as to wages, profits, and other pertinent conditions of the occupation or industry. The commission, or any member thereof, shall have power to subpoena witnesses, to administer oaths, and to compel the production of books, papers, and other evidence. Witnesses subpoenaed by the commission may be allowed such compensation for travel and attendance as it may deem reasonable, to an amount not exceeding the usual mileage and per diem allowed by our courts in civil cases.

[1913 c. 547 s. 4] (4216)

177.06 LEGAL MINIMUM WAGES TO BE ESTABLISHED. If after investigation of any occupation the commission is of opinion that the wages paid to one-sixth or more of the women or minors employed therein are less than living wages, it shall forthwith proceed to establish legal minimum rates of wages for that occupation, as hereinafter described and provided.

[1913 c. 547 s. 5] (4217)

177.07 WAGES, ORDERS. Subdivision 1. **Minimum wages.** The commission shall determine the minimum wages sufficient for living wages for women and minors of ordinary ability and also the minimum wages sufficient for living wages for learners and apprentices. The commission shall then issue an order, to be effective 30 days thereafter, making the wages thus determined the minimum wages in said occupation throughout the state, or within any area of the state if differences in the cost of living warrant this restriction. Those provisions of any order heretofore or hereafter issued by the commission with reference to the rate of pay for each hour of employment in excess of the minimum number of hours established by the commission, shall not apply to cases in which night telephone operators may be at their place of employment for no more than 12 hours and shall have an opportunity for at least four hours of sleep during the 12 hours of employment, and shall not apply to telephone operators employed in cities, towns, villages, boroughs, and townships of less than 1,500 inhabitants.

Subd. 2. **Publishing orders.** Such order shall be published in one issue of a daily newspaper of general circulation published in each city of the first class, at least 20 days before the same takes effect, and proof of such publication as required in the publication of legal notices, together with the original order, shall be filed with the commission. A copy of such order and of the proofs of publication, duly certified by the secretary of the commission, shall be prima facie evidence of the existence of such order and the contents thereof, and of the facts of publication as contained in such certified copies, and the certificate of the secretary shall be prima facie evidence of the filing and of other acts required by law in relation to the order.

Subd. 3. **Copies mailed and posted.** The commission shall mail to each employer affected by the order, whose name and address is known to it, copies of the order, with such general or particular directions for posting the same as it may determine, and such employer shall post such order and keep the same posted in his factory or place where women or minors are employed as required by it. Failure to mail such orders to any employer affected thereby shall not relieve such employer from the duty to comply with such order in relation to the payment of a wage not less than the minimum prescribed in such order.

[1913 c. 547 s. 6; 1923 c. 153 s. 1; 1939 c. 186] (4218)

177.08 ADVISORY BOARDS. The commission may at its discretion establish in any occupation an advisory board, which shall serve without pay, consisting of not less than three, nor more than ten, persons representing employers, and an equal number of persons representing the workers in the occupation, and of one or more disinterested persons appointed by the commission to represent the public; but the number of representatives of the public shall not exceed the number of

representatives of either of the other parties. At least one-fifth of the membership of any advisory board shall be composed of women, and at least one of the representatives of the public shall be a woman. The commission shall make rules and regulations governing the selection of members and the modes of procedure of the advisory boards and exercise exclusive jurisdiction over all questions arising with reference to the validity of the procedure and determination of these boards. The selection of members representing employers and employees shall be so far as practicable through election by employers and employees, respectively.

[1913 c. 547 s. 7] (4219)

177.09 POWERS AND DUTIES OF BOARDS; ESTIMATES OF WAGES. Each advisory board shall have the same power as the commission to subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, and compel the production of books, papers, and other evidence. Witnesses subpoenaed by an advisory board shall be allowed the same compensation as when subpoenaed by the commission. Each advisory board shall recommend to the commission an estimate of the minimum wages, whether by time rate or by price rate, sufficient for living wages for women and minors of ordinary ability, and an estimate of the minimum wages sufficient for living wages for learners and apprentices. A majority of the entire membership of an advisory board shall be necessary and sufficient to recommend wage estimates to the commission.

[1913 c. 547 s. 8] (4220)

177.10 REVIEW; DETERMINATION OF WAGES. Upon receipt of estimates of wages from an advisory board, the commission shall review the same and, if it approves them, shall make them the minimum wages in that occupation, as provided in section 177.07. Such wages shall be regarded as determined by the commission itself and the order of the commission putting them into effect shall have the same force and authority as though the wages were determined without the assistance of an advisory board.

[1913 c. 547 s. 9] (4221)

177.11 WAGES TO REMAIN IN FORCE; NEW RATES. All rates of wages ordered by the commission shall remain in force until new rates are determined and established by the commission. At the request of approximately one-fourth of the employers or employees in an occupation, the commission must reconsider the rates already established therein and may, if it sees fit, order new rates of minimum wages for the occupation. It may likewise reconsider old rates and order new minimum rates on its own initiative.

[1913 c. 547 s. 10] (4222)

177.12 EMPLOYMENT AT LESSER WAGE; SPECIAL LICENSE. For any occupation in which a minimum time rate of wages only has been ordered the commission may issue to a woman physically defective a special license authorizing her employment at a wage less than the general minimum ordered in the occupation, and may fix a special wage for such person. The number of such persons shall not exceed one-tenth of the whole number of workers in any establishment.

[1913 c. 547 s. 11] (4223)

177.13 NOT TO EMPLOY AT LESS THAN MINIMUM WAGE. Every employer in any occupation is hereby prohibited from employing any worker at less than the living wage or minimum wage as determined in an order of the commission; and it shall be unlawful for any employer to employ any worker at less than living or minimum wage.

[1913 c. 547 s. 12] (4224)

177.14 DISCRIMINATION AGAINST EMPLOYEES. It shall be unlawful for any employer to discharge or in any manner discriminate against any employee because such employee has testified, or is about to testify, or because such employer believes that the employee is about to testify, in any investigation or proceeding relative to the enforcement of this chapter.

[1913 c. 547 s. 13] (4225)

177.15 ACTIONS TO RECOVER FULL WAGES. Any worker who receives less than the minimum wage ordered by the commission shall be entitled to recover in civil action the full amount due as measured by the order of the commission, together with costs and attorney's fees to be fixed by the court, notwithstanding any agreement to work for a lesser wage.

[1913 c. 547 s. 14] (4226)

177.16. ENFORCEMENT. The commission shall enforce the provisions of this chapter and determine all questions arising thereunder, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.

[1913 c. 547 s. 15] (4227)

177.17 BIENNIAL REPORT. The commission shall biennially make a report of its work to the governor and the legislature and such reports shall be printed and distributed as in the case of other executive documents.

[1913 c. 547 s. 16] (4228)

177.18 EXPENSES AND SALARY. The members of the commission shall be reimbursed for traveling and other necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The woman member shall receive a salary of \$1,800 annually for her work as secretary. All claims of the commission for expenses necessarily incurred in the administration of this chapter, but not exceeding the appropriation provided, shall be presented to the state auditor for payment by warrant upon the state treasurer.

[1913 c. 547 s. 17] (4229)

177.19 VIOLATION BY EMPLOYER. Any employer violating any of the provisions of this chapter shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor; and, upon conviction thereof, punished for each offense by a fine of not less than \$10, nor more than \$50, or by imprisonment for not less than ten nor more than 60 days.

[1913 c. 547 s. 19] (4231)