**Ask an HR Advisor: Travel Time**

**Q:  How does the DOL view travel time?**

**A:**In general, time spent traveling during normal work hours **IS** considered compensable; so, for example, if the employee travels from one job site to another during their normal work hours, the employer is responsible for paying wages during those hours. Time spent traveling from home to work, even if in a company vehicle, is generally not considered compensable.  However, this applies only if the travel is to the employee’s usual workplace; if they have to travel outside their normal commuting area, other rules apply depending on if the travel is a special one-day assignment in another city or if the travel is away from the employee’s home community.

**Home to Work on a Special One-Day Assignment in Another City:**

An employee who regularly works at a fixed location in one city is given a special one-day assignment in another city and returns home the same day. The time spent in traveling to and returning from the other city is work time, except that the employer may deduct/not count that time the employee would normally spend commuting to the regular work site.

**Travel Away from Home Community:**

Travel that keeps an employee away from home overnight is travel away from home. Travel away from home is clearly work time when it cuts across the employee's workday. The time is not only hours worked on regular working days during normal working hours but also during corresponding hours on nonworking days. As an enforcement policy the Division will not consider as work time that time spent in travel away from home outside of regular working hours as a passenger on an airplane, train, boat, bus, or automobile.

**A recent DOL Opinion Letter explored a few scenarios and emphasized:**

* If an employer requires that employees report to the office first (a central location) and then go to job sites, then the time spent traveling to those job sites **IS** compensable.  This is true whether the travel is local or outside the normal employer’s area. The time the employee spent traveling from home to the office **is not** compensable.
* If an employee chooses to travel on their own to the job site, the time may (or may not) be compensable.  The key is determining if the activity is “integral and indispensable to the principal activity the employee is to perform.”

Written by a Catapult Advisor.