



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350

IN REPLY REFER TO
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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 12532.1

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Activity Support of Wage Surveys of the Federal Wage System

Ref: (a) FPM Supplement 532-1, S5-3 (NOTAL)

Encl: (1) Guidelines for Field Activity Support of FWS Wage Surveys

1. Purpose. Reference (a) sets forth responsibilities of field activities for supporting wage surveys under the Federal Wage System (FWS). This instruction directs activities to provide such support, re-emphasizes its importance, and outlines the nature of the support required.

2. Marine Corps. This instruction has been coordinated with the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The Commandant has authorized its transmission to Marine Corps activities.

3. Background. A Navy or Marine Corps installation serves as host activity in some 23 of the 110 wage survey areas for which the Department of Defense is designated as the lead agency. These 23 areas contain all of the naval shipyards and naval air rework facilities as well as a very high proportion of other activities of the Naval Establishment employing civilian wage employees, and the host activity provides the chairman of the Local Wage Survey Committee (LWSC). Many Navy and Marine Corps activities furnish data collectors for surveys in these and other areas; some of these activities also furnish the management member for the LWSC. Because of the millions of dollars involved in wage changes resulting from surveys, activities have an obvious stake in the outcome and they have an opportunity to contribute to the accuracy of the data collected. Each participating activity shares responsibility for the degree of trust placed in the system by employees, private sector managers and the public.

4. Guidelines. Enclosure (1) provides detailed information on the nature of support and participation by field activities in the wage survey process under the Federal Wage System.

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5. Action. Activities employing wage employees are to fully support their locality wage surveys in accordance with the guidelines provided in enclosure (1).

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GUIDELINES FOR FIELD ACTIVITY
SUPPORT OF FWS WAGE SURVEYS

1. General. A Federal Wage System wage survey essentially involves obtaining data from a sample of private firms in an area concerning wages and other forms of compensation paid to blue collar workers in carefully selected and defined jobs. The survey is the responsibility of a designated host activity, such as a naval shipyard, and is carried out by a three-person Local Wage Survey Committee (LWSC) which is supported by the host activity. (Alternate LWSC members are also appointed and actively participate as determined locally). Other activities in the area with wage employees are also expected to support the wage survey principally by supplying data collectors as requested. All activities are affected to some degree by the outcome of the survey and quality of data collected because of the millions of dollars involved in wage changes and because of the pay relationships among the various wage and salary schedules within each area.

2. Wage Survey Tasks

a. Local Wage Survey (LWSC) Responsibilities. The LWSC has the following responsibilities in the general order in which they are carried out:

(1) Solicit from local activities a count of trades employees by union affiliation, review the count and submit the data to the DOD Wage Fixing Authority (DODWFA):

(2) Determine the survey timetable or schedule of events;

(3) Hold hearings and make recommendations on optional features of the survey such as additional jobs or firms to be included in the survey;

(4) Screen and locate firms to be contacted based on lists furnished by the Department of Labor;

(5) Advise firms in writing of proposed visits by data collectors;

(6) Determine the number of data collectors needed;

(7) Assign data collection teams to the firms to be contacted;

(8) Notify DODWFA of completion of survey arrangements;

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(9) Plan and obtain adequate parking space, office space, clerical assistance, telephone service, copying service, AUTODIN service, forms, supplies, etc. for the various events;

(10) Arrange for and participate in data collection training;

(11) Monitor and assure progress of the survey, resolve problems of data collectors, and assign alternate firms or alternate data collectors as needed; and

(12) Review and process data, assure follow-up visits to firms as needed, prepare reports, etc., and forward data to DODWFA.

Although these tasks appear reasonably straightforward, the survey effort must be carefully planned, adequately staffed and supported, and energetically executed. Local support in supplying qualified committee personnel and data collectors, adequate space and services, and other resources is needed to avoid the many pitfalls such as bottlenecks in reviewing data collected by teams, scheduling or personnel problems and other distractions which may lead to costly follow-up actions, missed deadlines, incorrect wage data and, ultimately, distorted wage scales.

b. Support of Full-Scale Wage Surveys. A full-scale wage survey is conducted in each wage area every other year. LWSC effort in this survey extends from a point in time six months in advance of the date the survey is ordered to a point at least several weeks after the survey has been ordered when the data have been collected and processed and necessary follow-ups have been completed. Initial tasks such as obtaining count data and planning events are accomplished by the chairperson alone or by the committee, with the aid of a DODWFA project officer and with clerical assistance. However, the bulk of the personnel and other resources are required during a two-week period during which the actual data collection process is carried out. Throughout the survey process, the committee chairperson and members should be allowed as much time as needed for their planning and scheduling activities, to prepare for hearings, to establish and maintain contacts, to prepare for data collector training, to monitor data collection activities, to prepare reports, and to carry out numerous other responsibilities in an effective manner. Many seemingly straightforward survey tasks can require unexpected effort, such as when lists of firms from Department of Labor turn out to contain names of many that have changed address, moved out of town, gone out of business, merged with another company, etc.

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LWSC members are selected in part for their maturity and may be trusted to use discretion on the time they must devote to survey tasks. Except when professional data collectors are used, the furnishing of data collectors is the responsibility of the host activity and other local activities. Activity managers should respond to requests to nominate data collectors by offering the highest quality personnel available and should ensure their release from regular duties to the extent required to receive training (two to three days); to receive assignments, visit firms and turn in data to the committee (normally three to five days over a two-week period); and to perform necessary follow-up calls. Advice and assistance from the data collector's activity on such matters as transportation and telephone calls have often helped to avoid missed appointments and other problems, although transportation is the responsibility of the host activity. Generally, each pair of data collectors is expected to visit about two or possibly three firms in a given day and transportation is clearly vital in meeting schedules. The host activity is responsible for providing office space, clerical help and other services needed by the Local Wage Survey Committee.

c. Support of Wage Change Surveys. Wage change surveys are conducted every two years, in between the full-scale surveys; and they entail far less personnel and resources than a full-scale survey. Most, if not all, of the data can be obtained by telephone by the LWSC and possibly some of the data collectors who participated in the previous, full-scale survey. Although the time and effort spent by committee members is similar to that spent on a full-scale survey, and although the volume of data is similar, hearings are not held, less training is needed, and other resources such as office and parking space, transportation, etc., are greatly reduced if not eliminated. Nevertheless, adequate resources are still critical to the success of the survey and accuracy is as important as in a full-scale survey.

d. Survey Follow-ups. The LWSC's responsibilities do not end when data is forwarded to the DODWFA in Washington, D.C. It may be necessary to reconvene the LWSC periodically to answer additional questions posed by the DOD Wage Fixing Authority and to follow up on company pay increases which become effective after the survey.

3. Qualifications of Survey Personnel

a. LWSC Chairperson. The policy of the Department of Defense is to assign only capable, knowledgeable and dependable people to chair the Local Wage Survey Committee and to retain the function for people who have managed the job successfully in the past. The person nominated for LWSC chairperson must possess the following attributes:

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(1) Be a General Schedule employee of the highest grade level practicable and will normally be an employee of the civilian personnel office.

(2) Be thoroughly familiar with the FWS Wage Survey process.

(3) Have a good working knowledge of federal classification and pay programs.

(4) Be a strong leader -- provide direction to the LWSC and set the pace for its activities.

(5) Be thorough, complete, fair, and accurate in all activities.

(6) Be dependable and inclined to follow through on actions without constant prodding.

(7) Meet established deadlines.

(8) Be responsive to the needs, requests and guidance of the DODWFA technical staff.

b. LWSC Management Members. The policy of the Department of Defense is that only capable, knowledgeable and dependable people should be appointed to this position. The appointee should also have the following qualifications:

(1) Be a General Schedule employee at GS-9 or above and be in a position to know and reflect management's positions on the issues.

(2) Be thoroughly familiar with the FWS Wage Survey process.

(3) Have a good working knowledge of Federal Wage System classification and pay programs.

(4) Be predisposed to strongly support management's positions on the issues and look out for management's interest.

(5) Be thorough, complete, fair, and accurate in all activities.

c. LWSC Labor Member. The lead agency determines the local labor organization entitled to designate the labor member of the LWSC, so notifies the local labor organization and its national

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headquarters, and forwards the name designated by the local to the head of the employing activity. The latter appoints the designated person as LWSC labor member. The responsibility of the activity head in this regard is to assure that the labor designee is a federal employee on active duty status in the wage area within the coverage of regular schedules of the Federal Wage System.

d. Data Collectors. One half the data collectors are wage employees of local activities who have been recommended by the labor member of the LWSC and one half are federal employees who have either been appointed by local activities or are professional data collectors supplied by DOD Wage Fixing Authority. The LWSC supplies a list of nominated labor data collectors to each employing activity and requests the activity head to appoint a specific number from the list as well as a specific number of management data collectors. FPM Supplement 532-1 requires that both management and labor appointees must be:

(1) Well-versed in the occupational content of a wide range of occupations.

(2) Well-acquainted with Federal Wage Administration practices.

(3) Able to approach the collection of wage data objectively and able to avoid any semblance of prejudicial approach.

(4) Able to maintain pleasant relations with people.

(5) Sufficiently balanced and mature to talk intelligently to private industry management representatives on an equal footing.

A person's willingness to drive may also be considered depending on circumstances. In order of preference, nominees for management data collectors should be GS-7 or above; WS-11 or above; WS-8, 9 and 10; or military personnel in positions comparable to the above groupings.

4. Office Space, Clerical Assistance and Transportation. While there are no set standards for the amount or quality of resources needed for any given survey, a discussion of these resources is in order. Adequate space is critical to the successful conduct of hearings, for data collector training and for actual data collection activities. For hearings, people from outside the host

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activity should be furnished clear directions to the hearing site and adequate parking should be available. Ample seating arrangements in an atmosphere conducive to the hearing process is at least equally important. Data collector training should be conducted in an accessible, easily located area with adequate parking space. A comfortable classroom or conference setting should be available together with training equipment such as lectern, blackboard or flip charts, overhead projector and screen, 16mm movie projector, sound system, paper, pencils, etc. as necessary or appropriate to the size of the class. Prior to the data collection process, an estimate of the number of data collectors who will be using the LWSC office space at any given time should be made so that space to accommodate the maximum number of people can be planned for. Transportation is the responsibility of the host activity. It may take various forms such as the use of privately owned vehicles (POVs), government vehicles, GSA rental cars, commercial rental cars or public transportation. The specific area and situation will vary so the means of transportation will also vary. Careful planning in the scheduling and assignment of data collectors can reduce the amount of space required, but adequate parking, table space, seating, telephone and directory service, etc. in reasonably comfortable and noise-free quarters are a must at this stage (data collection) so that bottlenecks and other frustrating and time-wasting activities can be avoided. With adequate facilities, scheduling can be accomplished more quickly and effectively, problem-solving and reviews of completed data sheets can be carried out in a smooth and unhurried atmosphere, and inaccurate data can be minimized. Clerical support for the committee members is needed to type various forms, correspondence and reports, to provide copying service, to keypunch text header cards and wage survey forms, to transmit punched card data via AUTODIN to the Pentagon Telecommunications Center, and to perform various other administrative services.

5. Training. Preceding paragraphs summarize the tasks inherent in the full scale and wage change surveys and note the qualification requirements for LWSC members and data collectors. Employees appointed to these important roles must avail themselves of training to ensure that they are well equipped to carry out their responsibilities. Some of the training may be accomplished in the form of self-development during the months that precede the ordering of the survey and some is handled in a classroom-type environment. It is expected that the employing activities will release these participants to attend the training sessions. Through one of the above means, the following training/self-development activities are to be accomplished as applicable:

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a. FPM Supplement 532-1. Subchapter S5, Prevailing Rate Determination, contains Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations for setting localized pay rates for FWS employees in accordance with Section 5343 of Title 5, U.S. Code. Survey job descriptions are contained in Appendix E, while Appendix F provides instructions for data collectors. All members of the LWSC should carefully study these three portions of the FPM Supplement, and data collectors must be thoroughly familiar with Appendices E and F.

b. Civilian Personnel Instruction (CPI) 532-1. Subchapter S3-4 and Subchapter S5 provide Department of the Navy instructions on the wage setting process to supplement OPM regulations in FPM Supplement 532-1. The CPI specifies responsibility at the activity and department level. The LWSC members should be familiar with these guides.

c. DOD Manual on Conducting Wage Surveys. This manual contains a detailed discussion of all phases of the full scale and wage change surveys. All LWSC members must be thoroughly familiar with the entire manual and carefully follow the procedures described therein.

d. DOD Training for LWSC Chairperson. With the beginning of the FY 82 full scale survey cycle, the technical staff of the DOD Wage Fixing Authority initiated a training seminar for LWSC chairpersons. The objective of the seminar is to furnish guidance and directions on current developments in the wage survey program and to develop ideas, recommendations and conclusions aimed at improving survey methods and practices. All LWSC chairpersons are expected to attend this seminar in order to maximize the capability to direct the local survey operations.

e. DOD Training on Data Collection. The technical staff's project officer assigned to each full scale survey conducts a three-day seminar that thoroughly covers the data collection process. All LWSC members and data collectors are required to attend the entire session.

f. Wage Change Survey Training. The wage change survey is conducted by LWSC members and data collectors that participated in the last full scale survey. The LWSC chairperson will utilize a package prepared by the technical staff to train other committee members and data collectors on the specific steps of the wage change survey. In case of turnover of LWSC membership, it is also imperative that the chairperson familiarize the new members with other steps of the wage setting process.