

## 20 CFR 655.1304

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**Code of Federal Regulations > TITLE 20 -- EMPLOYEES' BENEFITS > CHAPTER V -- EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR > PART 655-- TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES > SUBPART N -- LABOR CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR TEMPORARY AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES (H-2A WORKERS) [SUBPART N IS SUSPENDED. SEE 74 FR 25972, 25985, MAY 29, 2009.]**

### **§ 655.1304 Contents of job offers. [This section is suspended. See 74 FR 25972, 25985, May 29, 2009.]**

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[PUBLISHER'S NOTE: [74 FR 25972, 25985](#), May 29, 2009, suspended this section, effective June 29, 2009.]

- (a)** Preferential treatment of aliens prohibited. The employer's job offer must offer to U.S. workers no less than the same benefits, wages, and working conditions that the employer is offering, intends to offer, or will provide to H-2A workers. Except where otherwise permitted under this section, no job offer may impose on U.S. workers any restrictions or obligations that will not be imposed on the employer's H-2A workers.
- (b)** Job qualifications. Each job qualification listed in the job offer must not substantially deviate from the normal and accepted qualifications required by employers that do not use H-2A workers in the same or comparable occupations and crops.
- (c)** Minimum benefits, wages, and working conditions. Every job offer accompanying an H-2A application must include each of the minimum benefit, wage, and working condition provisions listed in paragraphs (d) through (q) of this section.
- (d)** Housing. (1) Obligation to provide housing. The employer must provide housing at no cost to the worker, except for those U.S. workers who are reasonably able to return to their permanent residence at the end of the work day. Housing must be provided through one of the following means:
- (i)** Employer-provided housing. Employer-provided housing that meets the full set of DOL OSHA standards set forth at [29 CFR 1910.142](#), or the full set of standards at §§ 654.404 through 654.417 of this chapter, whichever are applicable under § 654.401; or
  - (ii)** Rental and/or public accommodations. Rental or public accommodations or other substantially similar class of habitation that meets applicable local standards for such housing. In the absence of applicable local standards, State standards will apply. In the absence of applicable local or State standards, DOL OSHA standards at [29 CFR 1910.142](#) will apply. Any charges for rental housing must be paid directly by the employer to the owner or operator of the housing. The employer must document that the housing complies with the local, State, or Federal housing standards. Such documentation may include but is not limited to a certificate from a State Department of Health or other State or local agency or a statement from the manager or owner of the housing.
- (2)** Standards for range housing. Housing for workers principally engaged in the range production of livestock shall meet standards of DOL OSHA for such housing. In the absence of such standards, range housing for shepherders and other workers engaged in the range production of livestock must meet guidelines issued by ETA.

**(3) Deposit charges.** Charges in the form of deposits for bedding or other similar incidentals related to housing must not be levied upon workers. However, employers may require workers to reimburse them for damage caused to housing, bedding, or other property by the individual workers found to have been responsible for damage which is not the result of normal wear and tear related to habitation.

**(4) Charges for public housing.** If public housing provided for migrant agricultural workers under the auspices of a local, county, or State government is secured by the employer, the employer must pay any charges normally required for use of the public housing units (but need not pay for optional, extra services) directly to the housing's management.

**(5) Family housing.** When it is the prevailing practice in the area of intended employment and the occupation to provide family housing, family housing must be provided to workers with families who request it.

**(6) Housing inspection.** In order to ensure that the housing provided by an employer under this section meets the relevant standard:

**(i)** An employer must make the required attestation, which may include an attestation that the employer is complying with the procedures set forth in § 654.403, at the time of filing the Application for Temporary Employment Certification pursuant to § 655.105(e)(2).

**(ii)** The employer must make a request to the SWA for a housing inspection no less than 60 days before the date of need, except where otherwise provided under this part.

**(iii)** The SWA must make its determination that the housing meets the statutory criteria applicable to the type of housing provided prior to the date on which the Secretary is required to make a certification determination under INA sec. 218(c)(3)(A), which is 30 days before the employer's date of need. SWAs must not adopt rules or restrictions on housing inspections that unreasonably prevent inspections from being completed in the required time frame, such as rules that no inspections will be conducted where the housing is already occupied or is not yet leased. If the employer has attested to and met all other criteria for certification, and the employer has made a timely request for a housing inspection under this paragraph, and the SWA has failed to complete a housing inspection by the statutory deadline of 30 days prior to date of need, the certification will not be withheld on account of the SWA's failure to meet the statutory deadline. The SWA must in such cases inspect the housing prior to or during occupation to ensure it meets applicable housing standards. If, upon inspection, the SWA determines the supplied housing does not meet the applicable housing standards, the SWA must promptly provide written notification to the employer and the CO. The CO will take appropriate action, including notice to the employer to cure deficiencies. An employer's failure to cure substantial violations can result in revocation of the temporary labor certification.

**(7) Certified housing that becomes unavailable.** If after a request to certify housing (but before certification), or after certification of housing, such housing becomes unavailable for reasons outside the employer's control, the employer may substitute other rental or public accommodation housing that is in compliance with the local, State, or Federal housing standards applicable under paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section and for which the employer is able to submit evidence of such compliance. The employer must notify the SWA in writing of the change in accommodations and the reason(s) for such change and provide the SWA evidence of compliance with the applicable local, State or Federal safety and health standards, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section. The SWA must notify the CO of all housing changes and of any noncompliance with the standards set forth in paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section. Substantial noncompliance can result in revocation of the temporary labor certification under § 655.117.

**(e)**Workers' compensation. The employer must provide workers' compensation insurance coverage in compliance with State law covering injury and disease arising out of and in the course of the worker's employment. If the type of employment for which the certification is sought is not covered by or is exempt from the State's workers' compensation law, the employer must provide, at no cost to the worker, insurance covering injury and disease arising out of and in the course of the worker's employment that will provide benefits at least equal to those provided under the State workers' compensation law for other comparable employment. The employer must retain for 3 years from the date of certification of the application, the name of the insurance carrier, the insurance policy number, and proof of insurance for the dates of need, or, if appropriate, proof of State law coverage.

**(f)**Employer-provided items. Except as provided in this paragraph, the employer must provide to the worker, without charge or deposit charge, all tools, supplies, and equipment required to perform the duties assigned. The employer may charge the worker for reasonable costs related to the worker's refusal or negligent failure to return any property furnished by the employer or due to such worker's willful damage or destruction of such property. Where it is a common practice in the particular area, crop activity and occupation for workers to provide tools and equipment, with or without the employer reimbursing the workers for the cost of providing them, such an arrangement will be permitted, provided that the requirements of sec. 3(m) of the FLSA at [29 U.S.C. 203\(m\)](#) are met. Section 3(m) does not permit deductions for tools or equipment primarily for the benefit of the employer that reduce an employee's wage below the wage required under the minimum wage, or, where applicable, the overtime provisions of the FLSA.

**(g)**Meals. The employer either must provide each worker with three meals a day or must furnish free and convenient cooking and kitchen facilities to the workers that will enable the workers to prepare their own meals. Where the employer provides the meals, the job offer must state the charge, if any, to the worker for such meals. The amount of meal charges is governed by § 655.114.

**(h) Transportation; daily subsistence.**

**(1)**Transportation to place of employment. If the employer has not previously advanced such transportation and subsistence costs to the worker or otherwise provided such transportation or subsistence directly to the worker by other means and if the worker completes 50 percent of the work contract period, the employer must pay the worker for reasonable costs incurred by the worker for transportation and daily subsistence from the place from which the worker has departed to the employer's place of employment. For an H-2A worker coming from outside of the U.S., the place from which the worker has departed is the place of recruitment, which the Department interprets to mean the appropriate U.S. consulate or port of entry. When it is the prevailing practice of non-H-2A agricultural employers in the occupation in the area to do so, or when the employer extends such benefits to similarly situated H-2A workers, the employer must advance the required transportation and subsistence costs (or otherwise provide them) to U.S. workers. The amount of the transportation payment must be no less (and is not required to be more) than the most economical and reasonable common carrier transportation charges for the distances involved. The amount of the daily subsistence payment must be at least as much as the employer would charge the worker for providing the worker with three meals a day during employment (if applicable), but in no event less than the amount permitted under paragraph (g) of this section.

**(2)**Transportation from last place of employment to home country. If the worker completes the work contract period, and the worker has no immediately subsequent H-2A employment, the employer must provide or pay for the worker's transportation and daily subsistence from the place of employment to the place from which the worker, disregarding intervening employment, departed to work for the employer. For an H-2A worker coming from outside of the U.S., the place from which the worker has departed will be considered to be the appropriate U.S. consulate or port of entry.

**(3)**Transportation between living quarters and worksite. The employer must provide transportation between the worker's living quarters (i.e., housing provided or secured by the employer pursuant to paragraph (d) of this section) and the employer's worksite at no cost to the worker, and such

transportation must comply with all applicable Federal, State or local laws and regulations, and must provide, at a minimum, the same vehicle safety standards, driver licensure, and vehicle insurance as required under [29 U.S.C. 1841](#) and 29 CFR part 500, subpart D. If workers' compensation is used to cover such transportation, in lieu of vehicle insurance, the employer must either ensure that the workers' compensation covers all travel or that vehicle insurance exists to provide coverage for travel not covered by workers' compensation.

**(i) Three-fourths guarantee.**

**(1) Offer to worker.** The employer must guarantee to offer the worker employment for a total number of work hours equal to at least three-fourths of the workdays of the total period beginning with the first workday after the arrival of the worker at the place of employment or the advertised contractual first date of need, whichever is later, and ending on the expiration date specified in the work contract or in its extensions, if any. For purposes of this paragraph a workday means the number of hours in a workday as stated in the job order and excludes the worker's Sabbath and Federal holidays. The employer must offer a total number of hours to ensure the provision of sufficient work to reach the three-fourths guarantee. The work hours must be offered during the work period specified in the work contract, or during any modified work contract period to which the worker and employer have mutually agreed and has been approved by the CO. The work contract period can be shortened by agreement of the parties only with the approval of the CO. In the event the worker begins working later than the specified beginning date of the contract, the guarantee period begins with the first workday after the arrival of the worker at the place of employment, and continues until the last day during which the work contract and all extensions thereof are in effect. Therefore, if, for example, a work contract is for a 10-week period, during which a normal workweek is specified as 6 days a week, 8 hours per day, the worker would have to be guaranteed employment for at least 360 hours (e.g., 10 weeks x 48 hours/week = 480-hours x 75 percent = 360). If a Federal holiday occurred during the 10-week span, the 8 hours would be deducted from the total guaranteed. A worker may be offered more than the specified hours of work on a single workday. For purposes of meeting the guarantee, however, the worker will not be required to work for more than the number of hours specified in the job order for a workday, or on the worker's Sabbath or Federal holidays. However, all hours of work actually performed may be counted by the employer in calculating whether the period of guaranteed employment has been met. If the employer affords the U.S. or H-2A worker during the total work contract period less employment than that required under this paragraph, the employer must pay such worker the amount the worker would have earned had the worker, in fact, worked for the guaranteed number of days.

**(2) Guarantee for piece rate paid worker.** If the worker will be paid on a piece rate basis, the employer must use the worker's average hourly piece rate earnings or the AEW, whichever is higher, to calculate the amount due under the guarantee.

**(3) Failure to work.** Any hours the worker fails to work, up to a maximum of the number of hours specified in the job order for a workday, when the worker has been offered an opportunity to do so in accordance with paragraph (i)(1) of this section, and all hours of work actually performed (including voluntary work over 8 hours in a workday or on the worker's Sabbath or Federal holidays), may be counted by the employer in calculating whether the period of guaranteed employment has been met. An employer seeking to calculate whether the number of hours has been met must maintain the payroll records in accordance with paragraph (j)(2) of this section.

**(4) Displaced H-2A worker.** The employer is not liable for payment under paragraph (i)(1) of this section to an H-2A worker whom the CO certifies is displaced because of the employer's compliance with § 655.105(d) with respect to referrals made after the employer's date of need. The employer is, however, liable for return transportation for any such displaced worker in accordance with paragraph (h)(2) of this section.

**(5) Obligation to provide housing and meals.** Notwithstanding the three-fourths guarantee contained in this section, employers are obligated to provide housing and subsistence for each day of the

contract period up until the day the workers depart for other H-2A employment, depart to the place outside of the U.S. from which the worker came, or, if the worker voluntarily abandons employment or is terminated for cause, the day of such abandonment or termination.

**(j) Earnings records.**

(1) The employer must keep accurate and adequate records with respect to the workers' earnings, including but not limited to field tally records, supporting summary payroll records, and records showing the nature and amount of the work performed; the number of hours of work offered each day by the employer (broken out by hours offered both in accordance with and over and above the three-fourths guarantee at paragraph (i)(3) of this section); the hours actually worked each day by the worker; the time the worker began and ended each workday; the rate of pay (both piece rate and hourly, if applicable); the worker's earnings per pay period; the worker's home address; and the amount of and reasons for any and all deductions taken from the worker's wages.

(2) Each employer must keep the records required by this part, including field tally records and supporting summary payroll records, safe and accessible at the place or places of employment, or at one or more established central recordkeeping offices where such records are customarily maintained. All records must be available for inspection and transcription by the Secretary or a duly authorized and designated representative, and by the worker and representatives designated by the worker as evidenced by appropriate documentation (an Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative, Form G-28, signed by the worker, or an affidavit signed by the worker confirming such representation). Where the records are maintained at a central recordkeeping office, other than in the place or places of employment, such records must be made available for inspection and copying within 72 hours following notice from the Secretary, or a duly authorized and designated representative, and by the worker and designated representatives as described in this paragraph.

(3) To assist in determining whether the three-fourths guarantee in paragraph (i) of this section has been met, if the number of hours worked by the worker on a day during the work contract period is less than the number of hours offered, as specified in the job offer, the records must state the reason or reasons therefore.

(4) The employer must retain the records for not less than 3 years after the completion of the work contract.

**(k) Hours and earnings statements.** The employer must furnish to the worker on or before each payday in one or more written statements the following information:

(1) The worker's total earnings for the pay period;

(2) The worker's hourly rate and/or piece rate of pay;

(3) The hours of employment offered to the worker (broken out by offers in accordance with, and over and above, the guarantee);

(4) The hours actually worked by the worker;

(5) An itemization of all deductions made from the worker's wages; and

(6) If piece rates are used, the units produced daily.

**(l) Rates of pay.**

(1) If the worker is paid by the hour, the employer must pay the worker at least the AEW in effect at the time recruitment for the position was begun, the prevailing hourly wage rate, the prevailing piece rate, or the Federal or State minimum wage rate, whichever is highest, for every hour or portion thereof worked during a pay period; or

(2)

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**(i)** If the worker is paid on a piece rate basis and the piece rate does not result at the end of the pay period in average hourly piece rate earnings during the pay period at least equal to the amount the worker would have earned had the worker been paid at the appropriate hourly rate, the worker's pay must be supplemented at that time so that the worker's earnings are at least as much as the worker would have earned during the pay period if the worker had instead been paid at the appropriate hourly wage rate for each hour worked;

**(ii)** The piece rate must be no less than the piece rate prevailing for the activity in the area of intended employment; and

**(iii)** If the employer who pays by the piece rate requires one or more minimum productivity standards of workers as a condition of job retention, such standards must be specified in the job offer and must be normal, meaning that they may not be unusual for workers performing the same activity in the area of intended employment.

**(m)** Frequency of pay. The employer must state in the job offer the frequency with which the worker will be paid, which must be at least twice monthly.

**(n)** Abandonment of employment or termination for cause. If the worker voluntarily abandons employment before the end of the contract period, fails to report for employment at the beginning of the contract period, or is terminated for cause, and the employer notifies the Department and DHS in writing or by any other method specified by the Department or DHS in a manner specified in a notice published in the Federal Register not later than 2 working days after such abandonment or abscondment occurs, the employer will not be responsible for providing or paying for the subsequent transportation and subsistence expenses of that worker under paragraph (h) of this section, and that worker is not entitled to the three-fourths guarantee described in paragraph (i) of this section. An abandonment or abscondment shall be deemed to begin after a worker fails to report for work at the regularly scheduled time for 5 consecutive working days without the consent of the employer. Employees may be terminated for cause, however, for shorter unexcused periods of time that shall not be considered abandonment or abscondment.

**(o)** Contract impossibility. If, before the expiration date specified in the work contract, the services of the worker are no longer required for reasons beyond the control of the employer due to fire, weather, or other Act of God that makes the fulfillment of the contract impossible, the employer may terminate the work contract. Whether such an event constitutes a contract impossibility will be determined by the CO. In the event of such termination of a contract, the employer must fulfill a three-fourths guarantee for the time that has elapsed from the start of the work contract to the time of its termination as described in paragraph (i)(1) of this section. The employer must:

**(1)** Return the worker, at the employer's expense, to the place from which the worker (disregarding intervening employment) came to work for the employer, or transport the worker to the worker's next certified H-2A employer (but only if the worker can provide documentation supporting such employment), whichever the worker prefers. For an H-2A worker coming from outside of the U.S., the place from which the worker (disregarding intervening employment) came to work for the employer is the appropriate U.S. consulate or port of entry;

**(2)** Reimburse the worker the full amount of any deductions made from the worker's pay by the employer for transportation and subsistence expenses to the place of employment; and

**(3)** Pay the worker for any costs incurred by the worker for transportation and daily subsistence to that employer's place of employment. Daily subsistence will be computed as set forth in paragraph (h) of this section. The amount of the transportation payment will be no less (and is not required to be more) than the most economical and reasonable common carrier transportation charges for the distances involved.

**(p)** Deductions. The employer must make all deductions from the worker's paycheck that are required by law. The job offer must specify all deductions not required by law which the employer will make from

the worker's paycheck. All deductions must be reasonable. However, an employer subject to the FLSA may not make deductions that would violate the FLSA.

**(q)** Copy of work contract. The employer must provide to the worker, no later than on the day the work commences, a copy of the work contract between the employer and the worker. The work contract must contain all of the provisions required by paragraphs (a) through (p) of this section. In the absence of a separate, written work contract entered into between the employer and the worker, the job order, as provided in 20 CFR part 653, Subpart F, will be the work contract.

## History

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[\[42 FR 45899\]](#), Sept. 13, 1977; [52 FR 20507](#), June 1, 1987; [59 FR 41875](#), Aug. 15, 1994, as confirmed at [60 FR 26970](#), May 19, 1995; [65 FR 43538, 43543](#), July 13, 2000, withdrawn at [67 FR 59779](#), Sept. 24, 2002; [65 FR 67628](#), Nov. 13, 2000; [66 FR 49275](#), Sept. 27, 2001; [71 FR 35511, 35519, 35522](#), June 21, 2006; [73 FR 77110, 77207](#), Dec. 18, 2008; redesignated and suspended at [74 FR 25972, 25985](#), May 29, 2009]

Annotations

## Notes

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### [EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE:

[74 FR 25972, 25985](#), May 29, 2009, redesignated Subpart B as Subpart N, and suspended Subpart N, effective June 29, 2009.]

## Research References & Practice Aids

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### [CROSS REFERENCE:

This section was formerly § 655.104.]

### NOTES APPLICABLE TO ENTIRE TITLE:

EDITORIAL NOTE: Other regulations issued by the Department of Labor appear in 20 CFR chapters IV, V, VI, VII and IX, 29 CFR subtitle A and chapters II, IV, V, XVII and XXV, 30 CFR chapter I, 41 CFR chapters 50, 60, and 61, and 48 CFR chapter 29.

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