

January 5, 2004

In January and July of each year, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries publishes the prevailing wage rates that are required to be paid to workers on public works contracts in the state of Oregon. Quarterly updates are published in April and October.

These rates are determined using data collected from an annual statewide construction industry wage survey of occupations and crafts performing commercial building and heavy and highway construction in 14 geographic regions of the state.

BOLI conducted its first wage survey in 1996, and published its first rates based on survey data collected in 1997. Prior to 1997, survey information provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, (which was often outdated), was used. The state survey has continuously been improved to enhance data collection. The 2003 survey collected over one million hours of data for over 31,000 journeyman workers; both record numbers.

Since beginning my term as labor commissioner in January, 2003, I have sought the comments and suggestions of the public and construction industry for additional improvements to the survey process. I continue to encourage such input to ensure that the most accurate data possible is collected.

Prevailing wage rates are the minimum wages that must be paid to all workers employed in the construction, reconstruction, major renovation or painting of all public works, unless specifically exempted by state law. Copies of these rates must be incorporated into all bid specifications when the advertisement for such public works contracts is issued. A provision that prevailing wage rates must be paid must also appear in the contract. The rates in effect at the time the bid specifications are first advertised are those that apply for the duration of the project, with one exception: If, during the bidding process, the prevailing wage rates change, the public contracting agency has the option of amending the bid specifications to reflect such changes.

If you identify any errors in the rates published, please bring them to the attention of the Prevailing Wage Rate Coordinator in Portland at (503) 731-4709. If you have any questions about the manner in which the prevailing wage rates are enforced, contact the Wage and Hour Division in Portland at (503) 731-4074, or any of the bureau's field offices.



Dan Gardner
Commissioner
Bureau of Labor and Industries