



INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS/LOCAL 701

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NELDA WILSON

Business Manager and
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March 13, 2015

Prevailing Wage Rate Coordinator
Bureau of Labor and Industries
800 NE Oregon St. Suite 1045
Portland, OR 97232

RE: Request to revise the BOLI Power Equipment Operator definition by adding the Party Chief subclassification to Group 2

Dear Coordinator:

On behalf of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 701 (“Local 701”), I submit the following request to revise the Power Equipment Operator definition and add the Party Chief subclassification to Power Equipment Operator Group 2 as a covered prevailing wage classification under ORS 279C.

BOLI currently states the primary purpose of the Power Equipment Operator as: “Operates a variety of power construction equipment at the site of work, including but not limited to bulldozers, cranes, excavators, loaders, power shovels, and scrapers. Classification is based on the specific type of equipment that is being operated.”¹

Although Local 701 submitted a similar request in 2009, I would like to briefly revisit the Party Chief subclassification and its role in a construction survey crew.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Construction surveyors are involved in the construction process even before a job site is completely designed. They accurately locate proposed buildings, roads, and other infrastructure in order to meet planning and building codes and requirements. They also determine the precise location of potential obstacles and hazards to construction, such as underground pipes and utilities, in order to avoid interfering with services and ensure safe construction.

¹ BOLI, Definitions of Covered Occupations at 31, http://www.oregon.gov/boli/WHD/PWR/docs/defs_occps.pdf.

Once construction plans are completed, the construction surveyor remains an integral and critical part of the construction process. Construction surveyors establish the precise position and location for construction to begin and end by staking right-of-way, and determining the line and elevations necessary to allow a builder to determine the extent and positioning of leveling that needs to be conducted on a construction site. They also ensure that new construction will not interfere with existing infrastructure, such as underground pipes and utilities. In addition to this work, the construction surveyors continue to provide services throughout the construction process as well as maintaining asbuilt information. This includes routine interactions with the other craft workers on the job site, such as establishing the placement of carpenters' forms, plumbing the columns that are connected by iron workers, and providing the proper location for plumbing and electrical brackets, to name a few.

The work of a construction survey crew is done outdoors, on the work site. Some projects require traveling over rough terrain, on foot and in vehicles, similar to other construction trade workers, and may also require a surveyor to be away from home for weeks at a time, also similar to other construction trade workers. Smaller, modern survey crews must also carry significantly more equipment weight than the crews of the past, totaling about 80 pounds to be split amongst the crew, or borne entirely by the Party Chief in a one-person crew. This equipment includes, but is not limited to a "total station," GPS, rod, frost pin, hammer (4# or 8#), a bag of nails, rod hubs, lathes, flagging, and paint, to name a few. The total station is considerably heavier than the old transits, and the rod and accessories are much heavier than the old chain.

Traditionally, a construction survey crew included three to five craftspeople who specialized in certain measuring instruments. This generally included a Rodman who held the leveling staff while measurements of distance and elevation were made; a Chainman who helped measure distances with a surveyor chain; an Instrument Man who adjusted and read the instruments for measurement (level, transit, laser, calculators/field computers, etc.); and a Party Chief who directed the work. Until recently, both the U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division ("DOL") and BOLI have relied upon these alleged supervisory and managerial functions as a basis for denying PWR coverage to Party Chiefs.

As technology has advanced, which significantly includes the use of total station and GPS equipment, the standard crew size has been reduced to one to three: the Party Chief, often an Instrument Person, and occasionally an Apprentice.² This reduction in construction survey crew size has resulted in the broadening of the roles, requiring the Party Chief to perform all aspects of the job. Although the Party Chief directs the work at hand, the Party Chief also works directly with tools more than 80% of the time. Moreover, the physical demands of the job force the crew members to frequently switch duties as fatigue sets in.

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

In 2009, Local 701 submitted a request to add the construction surveyor craft to the prevailing wage rate determinations, pursuant to OAR 839-025-0006. In this letter, Local 701 requested the addition of four subclassifications: Chief of Parties, Party Chief, Instrument

² When an Apprentice is unavailable, this position may instead fall to an assistant to the Instrument Person that performs basic, lower-level skill duties, while gaining the necessary experience to progress, as directed by the Party Chief or Instrument Person.

Person, and Rod Person. This letter included a summary of each subclassification, descriptions of the educational and experience requirements, and descriptions of the necessary skills and tools.

In your response dated July 24, 2009, you stated that Local 701's description of the "duties performed by the Party Chief... are not duties that would be considered 'manual or physical in nature' performed by a 'worker' as defined in the law." However, you did state that "to the extent that work performed by survey crew members is primarily manual in nature...the PWR law would apply... Therefore, if [Instrument and Rod Persons] spend more than 20% of their time during any workweek performing duties which are manual or physical in nature as opposed to mental or managerial in nature, they would be required to be paid the applicable prevailing rate of wage." Ultimately, however, you declined to recommend neither a further study of the Construction Surveyor craft nor the establishment of a new classification, citing BOLI's recognition of Chainman/Stake Setter and Rod Person as Laborer Group 2 and Group 1 respectively. These Laborer tasks are actually associated with pipe and sewer work that has previously been laid out by the construction survey crew. Presently, BOLI recognizes our Group 4 Layout/Grade Setter (who works from plans); this is the type of work done by an Instrument Person.

In 2011, the International Union of Operating Engineers ("the IUOE") international headquarters office in Washington, D.C. issued an identical request to the DOL. Similar to Local 701's request, the IUOE's request advocated for the application of federal Davis-Bacon labor standards to Party Chiefs.

In its response, the DOL acknowledged that individuals performing primarily physical and/or manual work can be considered laborers or mechanics and thus subject to Davis-Bacon labor standards when employed on the construction site immediately before and during construction under covered contracts. *Ex. 1.* Moreover, the DOL pledged to take steps to ensure Davis-Bacon labor standards are applied to such survey crew members when they perform primarily physical and/or manual work.

The DOL carried out this pledge by issuing Memorandum No. 212 (*Ex. 2*) and revising Section 15e20 of the Field Operations Handbook. Memorandum No. 212 clarifies the application of Davis-Bacon labor standards to covered survey crew members:

The Wage and Hour Division (WHD) has historically recognized that members of survey crews who perform primarily physical and/or manual work on a Davis-Bacon covered project on the "site of the work" immediately prior to or during construction in direct support of construction crews may be laborers or mechanics subject to the Davis-Bacon labor standards. As a result of a review of WHD practices and procedures in applying this policy, and in light of information indicating that the composition and work of field survey crews have evolved with new technology field surveyors use in their work, WHD has determined that steps should be taken to ensure that the policy of recognizing survey crew members as laborers or mechanics is implemented appropriately in the administration and enforcement of Davis-Bacon labor standards on covered projects.

With regards to the IUOE's specific request for the Davis-Bacon coverage of Party Chiefs, the DOL recognized that the nomenclature and job duties of the classifications used for

survey crew members vary geographically. Thus, the applicability of Davis-Bacon labor standards depends on the actual duties the survey crew members perform and whether they are employed on the construction job site immediately prior to or during construction, and working in direct support of the construction crews. In determining whether a survey crew member's duties are "primarily physical and/or manual," the DOL noted that that the principal or most important duty that the individual performs is considered to be his or her "primary duty." This is a fact-based inquiry, which considers the totality of the character of the worker's job. Although the amount of time spent on physical and/or manual duties may provide strong guidance, this "primary duty" requirement is satisfied if the survey crew member spends more than half of his or her time performing such duties. With that being said, if the survey crew member meets the tests for exemption as a professional, executive, or administrative employee under 29 CFR Part 541, that individual is not a laborer or mechanic under 29 CFR 5.2(m).

The DOL also updated Section 15e20 of its Field Operations Handbook ("FOH") to read (new language is bold and underlined, deleted language is stricken-thru):

(a) Where surveying is performed immediately prior to and during actual construction, in direct support of construction crews, such activity is covered by DBRA. Under the United States Housing Act of 1937 and the Housing Act of 1949, the "development of the project" coverage test is broader and may also cover preliminary survey work.

(b) The determination as to whether certain members of survey crews are laborers or mechanics is a question of fact. **In determining whether a worker is a "laborer or mechanic" as defined under the Davis-Bacon Act, the touchstone is whether the worker's duties are manual or physical in nature (including those workers who use tools or who are performing the work of a trade). 29 CFR 5.2(m).** Such a determination must take into account the actual duties performed. **A survey crew member who performs primarily physical and/or manual duties while employed by a contractor or subcontractor in work performed immediately prior to or during actual construction in direct support of construction crew(s) on the site of the work will be considered a laborer or mechanic covered by the DB requirements.** ~~As a general matter, members of the survey party who hold the leveling staff while measurements of distance and elevation are made, who help measure distance with a surveyor chain or other device, who adjust and read instruments for measurement or who direct the work are not considered laborers or mechanics. However, a crew member who primarily does manual work, for example, clearing brush, is a laborer and is covered for the time so spent.~~

Both Memorandum No. 212 and the updates to the FOH clearly convey the DOL's intent that the applicability of the Davis-Bacon labor standards to survey crew members involves a fact-based inquiry, and depends on the nature and duty of the work of the survey crew member, rather than the job title under which that survey crew member works.

**PARTY CHIEFS ARE “WORKERS” AND ARE
COVERED BY AND OAR 839-025**

Under ORS 279C.840(1), any contractor or subcontractor must pay a worker on a public works project no less than the prevailing rate of wage. OAR 839-025-0004(32) defines a “worker” as:

[A] person employed on a public works project and whose duties are manual or physical in nature (including those workers who use tools or who are performing the work of a trade), as distinguished from mental, professional or managerial. The term "worker" includes apprentices, trainees and any person employed or working on a public works project in a trade or occupation for which the commissioner has determined a prevailing rate of wage. (*See* OAR 839-025-0035.)

Furthermore, OAR 839-025-0035(4) provides that an individual employed on a public works project must receive the applicable prevailing wages if that individual spends more than 20% of his or her time during the workweek performing manual or physical duties, rather than mental or managerial.

Local 701’s 2009 request listed the primary survey crew subclassifications and their job descriptions. On our review of this request, it is clear that the stated description for Party Chief is inaccurate, and instead states the duties of a land surveyor. Party Chiefs in construction survey crews work on the construction site immediately prior to and during actual construction.

When these construction survey crews were larger, the party chief directed the work of the other members while also performing hands-on work. Today, in a small, modern crew, the Party Chief is merely a lead person who performs *all* of the functions that the other crew member(s) perform(s). For example, the Party Chief will often physically set the points by pounding wood stakes into the ground, and will also spend several hours throughout the day up and down off the ground scribing concrete. The Operating Engineers Master Labor Agreement (“MLA”) between the Oregon-Columbia Chapter of Associated General Contractors of America, Inc., and Local 701 even includes a Construction Surveyors Addendum, which suggests that both management and labor do not consider the Party Chief to be a member of management. *Ex. 3*. Although the two-person survey crew is now standard in the industry, this addendum provides for a one-person crew, which consists of only a Party Chief; a two-person crew, which consists of a Party Chief and an Instrument Person; and a three-person crew which consists of a Party Chief, an Instrument person, and an Apprentice.³

Moreover, the Party Chief is not “subprofessional,” and does not primarily perform work that is mental or managerial. The minimum requirements do not mandate any license, certification, college degree, or even a high school diploma. The minimum objective requirements are 4 years’ experience as an Instrument Person and a GED. Although the Party

³ The MLA contains outdated language which is in need of updating. This includes the classification terminology in the Construction Surveyors Addendum. Today, a two-person construction survey crew includes a Party Chief and an Instrument Person, rather than a Party Chief and a Chainman; and a three-person construction survey crew includes a Party Chief, Instrument Person, and Apprentice, rather than a Party Chief, Instrument Person, and Chainman. In lieu of an Apprentice, this position may alternatively be occupied by an assistant to the Instrument Person, as described in Footnote 1.

Chief is neither professional nor “subprofessional,” it should be noted that the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) “professional” exemption only exempts *professional* employees, not “subprofessional” employees. 29 C.F.R. § 541.300(a).

Because significantly more than 20% of the Party Chief’s job functions are manual or physical, the Party Chief is a “worker” and thus covered under Oregon PWR laws. The Party Chief is furthermore neither a professional nor a subprofessional.

**BOLI CANNOT RELY ON THE ALLEGED SUPERVISORY
STATUS OF PARTY CHIEF TO DENY COVERAGE**

In light of the modern industry standard of a two-person survey crew, the Party Chief cannot be exempted from PWR standards due to any alleged supervisory or managerial status. As noted above, the Party Chief is merely a lead person who performs all of the functions that the other crew member(s) perform(s). Moreover, the Party Chief fails the FLSA “executive” exemption test as well as the FLSA “professional” exemption test. To qualify as an exempt executive under the FLSA, an employee must customarily and regularly direct the work of *two or more* other employees. 29 C.F.R. § 541.103(d). An exempt executive must, therefore, oversee a crew of three or more (including him- or herself). Although some modern survey crews are made up of three workers, the vast majority are one or two. Thus, if the FLSA wouldn’t consider an employee to be managerial, it defies logic for BOLI to consider that same employee managerial for PWR purposes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, Local 701 requests BOLI to revise the BOLI Power Equipment Operator definition by adding the Party Chief subclassification to Group 2.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dear Ms. Nadeau:

This is in response to your August 4, 2011 request, on behalf of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) and IUOE Local No. 12, that the Wage and Hour Division (WHD) recognize field surveyors performing on-site work that is functionally integrated with construction subject to Davis-Bacon labor standards as a subclassification of operating engineer that may be listed on Davis-Bacon prevailing wage determinations.

DOL guidance concerning survey crews

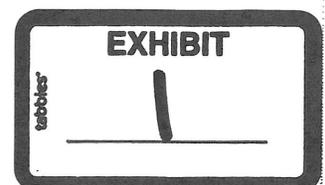
The DOL provided guidance concerning the applicability of Davis-Bacon labor standards to survey crews in All Agency Memoranda (AAM) Nos. 16 and 39, dated July 25, 1960 and August 6, 1962, respectively. AAM No. 16 distributed a June 29, 1960 letter issued by Acting Solicitor of Labor Harold C. Nystrom in response to a request by IUOE Locals 3 and 12 for reconsideration of the position expressed in a September 14, 1955 letter issued by Acting Assistant Solicitor Baird concerning the status of survey crew workers under the Davis-Bacon Act. In the 1960 letter, Acting Solicitor of Labor Nystrom observed that:

In [the 1955 Baird] letter, it was pointed out that survey work was often a pre-construction activity performed under a contract separate and apart from that which actually called for construction within the meaning of the Davis-Bacon Act and related Acts. It was also stated therein that the members of survey crews were engaged in professional or subprofessional work and could not, therefore be considered 'laborers or mechanics' within the meaning the [Davis-Bacon and related] Acts.

Acting Solicitor Nystrom, responding to the request of IUOE Locals 3 and 12, determined that:

Although the position which we have previously entertained is of long standing we have again undertaken to review the subject and have arrived at some new conclusions.

It is still our position that preliminary survey work such as the preparation of boundary surveys and topographical maps is not a part of construction covered by the Act, especially if performed pursuant to a separate contract. [We are prepared, however, to assert coverage of survey work which is undertaken immediately prior to or during



construction which involves laying off distances and angles to locate construction lines and other layout measurements. This includes the setting of stakes, the determination of grades and levels and other work which is performed as an aid to the crafts which are engaged in the actual physical construction of projects. ❁

With respect to the status of particular employees, we agree that the chainmen and rodmen whose work is largely of a physical nature such as clearing brush, sharpening and setting stakes, handling the rod and the tape and other comparable activities are laborers and mechanics within the meaning of the Act. On the other hand, a party chief has duties which would appear to place him in an executive class with overtones of a professional. Such a person always supervises two or more persons on the job The party chief also has substantial clerical duties and exercises the arts of the engineering profession. Both of these classifications are, of course, excluded from the group commonly accepted as laborers or mechanics.

The only classification which presents substantial difficulty is that of an instrument man working under a party chief as part of a four man crew. These men may occasionally perform the physical work of rodmen or chainmen. They also may carry and place the instruments as well as operate them. They make the sighting and take and record the readings. They may be called upon to exercise discretion, judgment and skill involving problems encountered in the field and they must be able to read blueprints and make sketches or drawings. Again, on the other hand, while construction is actually in progress they may function only as an aid to the construction workers in such matters as determining the placement and levels of pilings, the placement of steel beams and girders, the location of bolt holes, etc. In the specific area covered by your application [i.e., the request by IUOE Locals 3 and 12], they are members of a union engaged in an apprenticeship trade and customarily paid by the hour.

While working under a party chief, instrument men are not employed in a bona fide supervisory position. Neither do they qualify as professionals under Regulations, Part 541, issued under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The tests provided by these Regulations or tests similar to them are quite commonly accepted under both Federal and State laws. Therefore a substantial amount of physical work being involved, we believe it appropriate to regard the instrument men employed under a chief of party as laborers or mechanics with the reservation, however, that a contrary conclusion might be reached in particular cases if the facts and circumstances were different from those reflected in your presentation. Accordingly it is our intention to include in future wage determinations where appropriate, the classifications of 'rodmen', 'chainmen' and 'instrument men (serving under a party chief).'

Further guidance was issued in an August 2, 1962 letter from Secretary of Labor Arthur J. Goldberg to the Ohio Society of Professional Engineers, which was widely distributed as an attachment to AAM No. 39, dated August 6, 1962. In that letter, Secretary Goldberg referenced a conference he had held with representatives of the Ohio and National Societies of Professional Engineers on May 29, 1962 and a report submitted by the Ohio Society setting

forth its position that the duties of instrumentmen, rodmen and chainmen were "technical in nature" and "part of the engineering process" and not covered by the Davis-Bacon Act.¹ Upon careful review, with regard to whether the work performed by such persons constitutes construction, alteration, and/or repair, the Secretary determined that:

Since preliminary survey work merely affects construction without being a part of it, it is our position that such work is not generally covered by the Davis-Bacon Act. On the other hand, where surveying is performed immediately prior to and during actual construction in direct support of construction crews, such surveying would be deemed construction work within the meaning of this act.

He proceeded to observe that "[c]overage of the individuals performing this work would further depend upon their individual status as laborers or mechanics" and he noted a definitional distinction between the term "laborer" as "one who performs manual labor or labors at a toilsome occupation requiring physical strength as distinguished from mental

¹ In addition, on July 18, 1962, Solicitor of Labor Charles Donahue discussed the status of survey crews in testimony before the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor, Special Subcommittee on Labor, concerning Administration of the Davis-Bacon Act. In its July 1962 hearings, the Subcommittee also heard testimony and accepted extensive materials on this subject for the record from Mr. Roger Loveless on behalf of the National Society of Professional Engineers. Subsequent to the testimony presented by Mr. Loveless, Solicitor of Labor Donahue asserted in his oral testimony, and in the written testimony he submitted for the record, respectively:

By and large, any preliminary surveys concerning construction are not subject to the Davis-Bacon Act. They are not part of the construction contract. ... Now there are occasions when survey work is done in connection with the construction contract. There are cases where foundations are tested, holes are bored, there are other occasions where the surveys are made of the path of a highway, for example, across the country, directly in connection with construction, and in those cases, only in those cases, we would consider the survey as part of the construction work. [Oral testimony.]

[I]n many cases, survey work is not done as part of the construction contract, However, in certain cases such work is done as a part of the construction contract, and accordingly, the status of the members of the survey crews becomes an issue. The question to be resolved is, as the Attorney General pointed out, primarily a factual issue. In certain instances some members of the survey crews perform primarily manual work such as clearing brush and sharpening stakes, and in these cases the Department considers an employee so employed to fall within the definition of the term laborer. In other instances the work of the survey crews is limited to work of a professional or subprofessional character. In such instances survey crew members are not considered to be laborers or mechanics.

The Department's interpretation is in agreement with Mr. Loveless' conclusion that survey crews are covered only to the extent to which they perform work of a manual character.

Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on Labor of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, 87th Congress, "A General Investigation of the Davis-Bacon Act and its Administration," hearings held in Washington, D.C. July 12, 13, 18, 24, 26, 27, 31, and August 7, 1962, Part 3, pages 806 (oral testimony) and 823-824 (written testimony submitted for the record).

training and equipment" and the term "mechanic" as "any skilled worker with tools, one who has learned a trade."² In that context, he further stated that:

A determination that certain members of survey crews fall within this category depends largely upon questions of fact. This determination, which takes into account the actual duties performed by the employees involved, is primarily the responsibility of the contracting agency.

In those cases where the work of an individual functioning in a survey crew is considered professional or sub-professional in character, this Department has held, in accordance with your view, that one so employed is not a laborer or mechanic within the meaning of the Davis-Bacon Act. On the other hand, where individuals perform primarily manual work, such as clearing brush and sharpening stakes, they would fall within the definition of the term 'laborer'. It is my understanding that situations of the latter kind are not commonplace. However, to the extent that individuals are so employed, they are covered by the aforementioned law.

On numerous occasions since June 1962, the 1962 Goldberg letter has been reasserted as the framework of DOL policy regarding applicability of the Davis-Bacon labor standards to survey crew members employed on projects subject to Davis-Bacon requirements. In a January 10, 1964 letter to the California State Conference of Operating Engineers, then Under Secretary of Labor John F. Henning stated that:

[T]he Solicitor has reviewed the material which you forwarded regarding the coverage under the Davis-Bacon Act of workmen who, with respect to construction are engaged essentially in the transfer on the job site of lines and grades from blueprints to stakes, monuments, and points for use by various classes of construction workers.

From the particular facts and circumstances presented, the Solicitor has concluded that the duties of rodman, chainman and instrument man, which are described in your presentation, are those of laborers and mechanics under the act, as it has been interpreted in former Secretary Goldberg's letter of August 2, 1962, to the President of the Ohio Society of Professional Engineers. The workmen involved appear to perform predominantly manual work as contrasted with work which is professional or subprofessional in character.

² Secretary Goldberg cited 18 Comp. Gen. 341 as the source for this definitional distinction. The definitions appeared in Comptroller General Decision A-97726, concerning the applicability of the 1912 Eight-Hour law. The full paragraph in the Comptroller General's decision states:

The terms laborer and mechanic have been defined variously in numerous decisions in the courts, usually in connection with the application of lien statutes, but generally the term 'laborer' is defined as one who performs manual labor or labors at a toilsome occupation requiring physical strength as distinguished from mental training and equipment, while a 'mechanic' is any skilled worker with tools who has learned a trade. *In re Osborne*, 104 Fed. 780. Also see 'Words and Phrases' generally as to laborers and mechanics. Hence, the statute is applicable to every public contract otherwise within its terms which may require the employment of labor by hand or tools for its performance.

The Solicitor has further indicated that this does not in any way reverse the aforementioned letter of August 2, 1962. There it is recognized that whether workmen come within the compass of the terms 'laborer' or 'mechanic' presents largely a question of fact. Consequently, determinations of coverage may well vary in specific situations.

We shall include prevailing wage rates for the classifications noted above in future determinations for work to be performed in California and Nevada, whenever they are requested by the procurement agency or whenever it is apparent from the work to be performed that such classifications will be used in the construction process.

With regard to survey crews, section 15e20 of the WHD Field Operations Handbook (FOH) currently states that:

(a) Where surveying is performed immediately prior to and during actual construction, in direct support of construction crews, such activity is covered by DBRA. Under the United States Housing Act of 1937 and the Housing Act of 1949, the "development of the project" coverage test is broader and may also cover preliminary survey work.

(b) The determination as to whether certain members of survey crews are laborers or mechanics is a question of fact. Such a determination must take into account the actual duties performed. As a general matter, members of the survey party who hold the leveling staff while measurements of distance and elevation are made, who help measure distance with a surveyor chain or other device, who adjust and read instruments for measurement or who direct the work are not considered laborers or mechanics. However, a crew member who primarily does manual work, for example, clearing brush, is a laborer and is covered for the time so spent. [Emphasis added.]

IUOE assertions

You have asserted that the "WHD should start with the premise that workers employed on the 'site of the work' performing work that is functionally integrated with the construction are covered unless they are exempt for a reason specifically contemplated by the [Davis-Bacon] Act." You also have asserted that "based upon its misreading of a series of opinions issued between 1960 and 1964 the WHD has taken the position that only very limited functions performed by survey crews are covered"; that "the WHD has misread the regulatory definition of 'laborer and mechanic' in limiting coverage to workers based on the degree of physical demands of on-site construction jobs"; and that "if the WHD continues to limit coverage to work that is physical or manual, the WHD should nonetheless find that the field surveyors are 'laborers or mechanics.'" IUOE letter, pages 1, 14, 19, and 22.

The regulatory definition of laborers or mechanics, set forth in 29 CFR 5.2(m) states:

The term *laborer* or *mechanic* includes at least those workers whose duties are manual or physical in nature (including those workers who use tools or who are performing the work of a trade), as distinguished from mental or managerial. ... The term does not

apply to workers whose duties are primarily administrative, executive, or clerical, rather than manual. Persons employed in a bona fide executive, administrative, or professional capacity as defined in part 541 of this title are not deemed to be laborers or mechanics. Working foremen who devote more than 20 percent of their time during a workweek to mechanic or laborer duties, and who do not meet the criteria of part 541, are laborers and mechanics for the time so spent.

In this context, you describe the duties of field survey crew members as ranging from very physically demanding work, such as use of heavy sledge hammer to pound in laths, walking over challenging terrain, standing, stooping, bending, and carrying heavy objects (including GPS equipment) to more skilled work involved in executing plans prepared by office surveyors. You further indicate that due to technological changes, the norm is no longer the use of four-person crews including a supervisory member, but rather the employment of two-member crews in which a "party chief" is a lead person who performs the functions also performed by other survey crew members. You further state that no minimum level of formal education beyond a GED is required to become a field surveyor, field crew members are not required to hold a license or certification, and they do not exercise judgment or discretion in executing directions of the office surveyors. You assert that the members of field survey crews should not be generally considered as "professional" or "executive" employees. You also note that the mathematical knowledge needed to perform the work of a field surveyor, along with the physical demands of their work and their use of tools and equipment, are comparable to what is also true for other skilled construction trades workers.

Analysis

Since issuance of the 1960 Nystrom letter, the Department has taken the position that some work undertaken immediately prior to or during construction that is performed by survey crew members may be subject to the Davis-Bacon labor standards on covered projects. Clearly, since issuance of the 1962 Goldberg letter, it has been DOL policy that determinations as to whether certain members of survey crews are laborers or mechanics is a question of fact that must take into account the actual duties performed, and this agency's guidance has consistently held that where individuals perform "primarily manual work, such as clearing brush and sharpening stakes," they would fall within the definition of the term "laborer." We note that the 1962 Goldberg letter, while acknowledging a distinction between "laborers" and "mechanics," focused on duties that warrant requiring individual survey crew members to be considered "laborers." The question of whether members of a survey party might be considered "mechanics" – skilled workers with tools, who have learned a trade – generally has not been the focus of guidance concerning survey crew members who work with, adjust and read instruments to take measurements of distance and elevation, or otherwise measure distances and identify locations. In determining whether a worker (including a member of a survey crew) is a "laborer or mechanic" as defined under the Davis-Bacon Act, the touchstone is whether the worker's duties "are manual or physical in nature (including those workers who use tools or who are performing the work of a trade)." 29 C.F.R. 5.2(m).

The status of survey crew members as laborers or mechanics on projects to which the Davis-Bacon labor standards apply depends on the duties they perform. As you noted in your request for reconsideration of the WHD guidance concerning survey crews, the job titles used in classifying survey crew workers vary geographically. Along with variations in job titles, the duties of the classifications may vary from one area to another. Certain prior guidance issued by the Department concerning survey crews employed on construction projects has indicated that individual members of survey crews whose duties are "primarily professional or subprofessional" would not be considered laborers or mechanics. As is made clear in the definition of the term "*laborer or mechanic*," professional employees who meet the requirements for exemption under 29 CFR Part 541 are not laborers or mechanics within the meaning of the Davis-Bacon Act. Available information suggests that the term "sub-professional" encompassed survey crew members employed by engineering firms, including individuals pursuing a course of study to become professional engineers.³ We believe, however, that a focus on whether survey crew members are "sub-professional" cannot substitute for the central inquiry of whether the duties of a survey crew member performing on-site work that is functionally integrated with construction subject to Davis-Bacon labor standards are primarily physical and/or manual.

As we have not closely examined survey crew classifications and duties in detail in recent years, we believe that it is appropriate to identify and evaluate the extent of physical and manual work performed by the various survey crew classifications in use today. For example, you have suggested that current practices include the assignment of significantly modified and diverse duties to survey crew members who perform various tasks such as rodmen (who traditionally held the rod or leveling staff); the chainman (who uses a chain or other devices to assist in the measurement of distances and elevations); and other field surveyors who adjust and read surveyors' equipment (with an element of clerical work involving the recording of data) and/or possibly direct the work of others (in effect, as working foremen). To the extent

³ Mr. Loveless, in his testimony on behalf of the of the National Society of Professional Engineers before the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor, Special Subcommittee on Labor, cited above, Part 2, pages 544-545, asserted:

We think that the Nystrom opinion classifying members of survey crews as 'laborers and mechanics' was based on information that is not truly representative of the duties of these personnel throughout the country. It is very important that we recognize our subprofessional people for what they are. We are professional engineers and we have laborers and mechanics. In getting our work done today there are the people in between professionals and laborers and mechanics, many of whom we classify as subprofessional. It is important that their contribution be recognized. To take a man with 2 years of college or one who is a licensed surveyor or who may be a recent college graduate and is performing these duties as part of his training program in aspiring to become a professional engineer and classify him as a laborer or mechanic is not good for the country. We have to stimulate and move these people up. The engineers work hand in hand and arm and arm with these technical personnel. ... We would like the Congress to define the classification of these people as subprofessional. I think that it is important countrywide.

What we are saying here is that this work is predominantly of a technical and subprofessional and professional category; that if a contractor uses these to cut brush he shouldn't be using them on such and ... they do not fall into this category: In other words we see no reason under Davis-Bacon to list the wages of instrumentmen, rodmen, and chainmen because if they do what they are supposed to be doing they are not laborers and mechanics.

such survey crew members perform primarily physical and/or manual work on the site of the work in direct support of construction crews, such crew members would qualify as laborers or mechanics within the meaning of the Act and its implementing regulations. Moreover, in determining what constitutes physical and/or manual work, we believe it is appropriate to eschew an unduly narrow interpretation of the types of duties that qualify as physical and/or manual. Tasks such as clearing brush or sharpening stakes, for example, are merely illustrations of physical and/or manual work, and by no means reflect the full range of duties that may be considered physical and/or manual.

As we discussed earlier, WHD has historically acknowledged that individuals who perform primarily physical and/or manual work can be considered to be laborers or mechanics and subject to the Davis-Bacon labor standards when employed on the site of the work immediately prior to and during construction and in direct support of construction crews under covered contracts. As a result of our review in response to your request, steps will be taken to ensure that in the conduct of future prevailing wage surveys and in the processing of requests for additional classifications and rates (conformance requests), appropriate consideration will be given to survey crew workers employed by contractors and subcontractors in work performed immediately prior to or during actual construction in direct support of construction crews; and the Davis-Bacon labor standards will be applied to individuals performing such work when they perform primarily physical and/or manual work (including those workers who use tools or who are performing the work of a trade). For example, section 15e20 of the FOH will be revised to reflect that, consistent with a fact-based analysis, survey crew members who perform primarily physical and/or manual work will be considered laborers or mechanics. More detailed guidance will be issued in the near future to advise the contracting agencies concerning the implementation of this policy.

This letter constitutes a final ruling under 29 CFR 5.13 concerning current WHD policy regarding the applicability of Davis-Bacon labor standards to survey crew members. A petition for review may be filed with the Department of Labor Administrative Review Board pursuant to 29 CFR 7.9.

Sincerely,

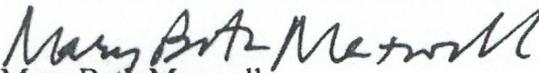
Mary Beth Maxwell
Acting Deputy Administrator



MAR 22 2013

MEMORANDUM NO. 212

TO: ALL CONTRACTING AGENCIES OF THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FROM: 
Mary Beth Maxwell
Acting Deputy Administrator

SUBJECT: Applicability of Davis-Bacon labor standards to members of survey crews

This memorandum clarifies the application of Davis-Bacon standards to survey crew members who may be employed as laborers or mechanics on projects subject to the labor standards of the Davis-Bacon and related Acts. This guidance supplements the guidance provided in letters that were distributed as attachments to All Agency Memorandum (AAM) No. 16, dated July 25, 1960, and AAM No. 39, dated August 6, 1962, available at <http://www.wdol.gov/aam.aspx>.

The Wage and Hour Division (WHD) has historically recognized that members of survey crews who perform primarily physical and/or manual work on a Davis-Bacon covered project on the "site of the work" immediately prior to or during construction in direct support of construction crews may be laborers or mechanics subject to the Davis-Bacon labor standards. As a result of a review of WHD practices and procedures in applying this policy, and in light of information indicating that the composition and work of field survey crews have evolved with new technology field surveyors use in their work, WHD has determined that steps should be taken to ensure that the policy of recognizing survey crew members as laborers or mechanics is implemented appropriately in the administration and enforcement of Davis-Bacon labor standards on covered projects. The discussion below focuses on appropriate processing of requests for additional classifications and rates (conformance requests), reporting of data during the conduct of future WHD prevailing wage surveys, and the enforcement of applicable rates on covered projects.

To ensure that WHD enforcement policy regarding survey crew members is clear, section 15e20 of the Field Operations Handbook (FOH) has been revised to reflect that survey crew members who perform primarily physical and/or manual work while employed by contractors and subcontractors immediately prior to or during actual construction, in direct support of construction crews, will be considered laborers or mechanics when



employed on the site of the work. The FOH, as revised, addresses applicability of Davis-Bacon requirements to survey crew members as follows:

15e20 Survey crews.

(a) Where surveying is performed immediately prior to and during actual construction, in direct support of construction crews, such activity is covered by DBRA. Under the United States Housing Act of 1937 and the Housing Act of 1949, the "development of the project" coverage test is broader and may also cover preliminary survey work.

(b) The determination as to whether certain members of survey crews are laborers or mechanics is a question of fact. In determining whether a worker is a "laborer or mechanic" as defined under the Davis-Bacon Act, the touchstone is whether the worker's duties are manual or physical in nature (including those workers who use tools or who are performing the work of a trade). 29 CFR 5.2(m). Such a determination must take into account the actual duties performed. A survey crew member who performs primarily physical and/or manual duties while employed by a contractor or subcontractor in work performed immediately prior to or during actual construction in direct support of construction crew(s) on the site of the work will be considered a laborer or mechanic covered by the DB requirements.

With regard to requests for additional classifications and rates (conformance requests), contracting agencies are advised to accept requests for classifications to be added to applicable Davis-Bacon wage determinations for survey crew members whose duties are primarily physical and/or manual while employed by the contractor or subcontractor(s) on Davis-Bacon covered projects immediately prior to or during construction in direct support of construction crews. In order to facilitate WHD's processing of conformance requests, each request should include information describing the duties of the survey crew members employed on the project. In examining whether the proposed wages bear a reasonable relationship to the rates in the applicable wage determination, proposed survey crew classifications should be compared with skilled classifications (excluding laborers, power equipment operators, and truck driver classifications) already listed in the applicable wage determination.

With regard to future Davis-Bacon prevailing wage surveys conducted by the WHD for issuance of new wage determinations, we request that contracting agencies encourage contractors and subcontractors to participate in those surveys by providing data to WHD for workers who performed surveying work immediately prior to or during construction in direct support of construction crews on construction projects in the area being surveyed. Information on upcoming surveys and other information concerning Davis-Bacon prevailing wage surveys is available at <http://www.dol.gov/whd/programs/dbra/surveys.htm>, and contacts in each of the WHD

Regional Offices regarding such surveys are available by clicking on the map or links above the map at <http://www.dol.gov/whd/programs/dbra/regions.htm>.

We also note that, as the Davis-Bacon Act requires the Secretary of Labor to determine prevailing wage rates for inclusion in covered contracts based on wage rates paid to “corresponding classes of laborers and mechanics employed on projects of a character similar to the contract work in the civil subdivision of the State in which the work is to be performed,” the classifications used for survey crew members may differ from area to area both in nomenclature (job titles) and in the content of the duties performed by particular classifications. The status of survey crew members as laborers and mechanics on projects to which the Davis-Bacon labor standards apply depends on the duties they perform, as well as whether they are employed by a contractor or subcontractor and whether they are employed on the site of the work immediately prior to or during actual construction in direct support of construction crew(s).

Finally, we note that in determining whether a survey crew member performs primarily physical and/or manual duties (including those workers who use tools or who are performing the work of a trade), the principal, main, major or most important duty or duties that the individual performs are considered to be his or her “primary duty.” Determination of a survey crew member’s primary duty must be based on the facts in a particular case, with the major emphasis on the character of the worker’s job as a whole. In this context, when determining the primary duty of a survey crew member it is appropriate to consider the relative importance of the manual and/or physical duties as compared with other types of duties performed by the workers in a particular classification. The amount of time normally spent performing manual and/or physical duties can be a useful guide in determining whether that work is the primary duty of an employee. Thus, survey crew members who normally spend more than 50 percent of their time performing such work will generally satisfy the primary duty requirement. Time alone, however, is not the sole test. For example, if a survey crew member meets the tests for exemption as a professional, executive or administrative employee under the rules established by 29 CFR Part 541, that survey crew member is not a laborer or mechanic as defined under 29 CFR 5.2(m).

CONSTRUCTION SURVEYORS
LABOR AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

**OREGON-COLUMBIA CHAPTER,
THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS
OF AMERICA, INC.**

AND

**INTERNATIONAL UNION OF
OPERATING ENGINEERS,
LOCAL UNION NO. 701**

This Agreement entered into this **FIRST DAY OF JUNE, 2007**, by and between **OREGON-COLUMBIA CHAPTER, THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA, INC.**, and the **INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS, LOCAL UNION No. 701**.



PREAMBLE

This Construction Surveyors Agreement is entered into by the Oregon-Columbia Chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America, Inc. hereinafter referred to as the "A.G.C.", and the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 701.

For purposes of this Agreement, the Oregon Columbia Chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America, Inc. is acting for and on behalf of Employers who have individually requested the A.G.C. to act as their individual and separate bargaining agent in individual Employer units. Further, each individual principal member reserves the right to review and accept or reject any proposed Agreement negotiated between the Union and the A.G.C. acting as an agent for the individual contractor members.

This collective bargaining Agreement between certain individual members of the A.G.C. (hereinafter referred to as the "Employer") and Local 701 of the International Union of Operating Engineers (hereinafter referred to as the "Union") shall constitute an Agreement between the parties hereto for the work, conditions and wage rates provided herein in the territory as described in Article II (Territory) of the current Master Labor Agreement between the Oregon-Columbia Chapter of the Associated General Contractors, of America, Inc. and the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 701, hereinafter referred to as the Principal Agreement.

ARTICLE I

PRINCIPAL AGREEMENT

The Employer agrees that all Construction Surveyors work performed within the territorial jurisdiction of Local 701 of the International Union of Operating Engineers shall be performed in conformity with the Principal Construction Agreement currently in effect between the Union and the AGC except as modified herein.

ARTICLE II

EFFECTIVE DATE AND DURATION

This Agreement shall be effective commencing June 1, 2007, and shall continue in force and effect through December 31, 2012. Modification or termination of this Agreement shall be effectuated as provided for under Article VI of the Principal Agreement.

ARTICLE III

WORK DEFINED

Survey work shall be that work performed by said Employees which requires the use of or utilizes a transit, tripod-mounted level, laser, electrotape, electronic measuring device, theodolite, and total station in connection with such work that shall include, but not be limited to, highway, building, heavy construction and engineering projects. Survey work will also include, but not be limited to, the establishment of control points governing construction operations on locations and elevations of embankment, excavations, piles, caissons and utilities.

ARTICLE IV

COMPOSITION OF PARTIES

Whenever the Employer requires Employees for the performance of survey work, the size of the survey crew will be determined by the Employer. The first survey Employee on the job site shall be a Party Chief. Any assistant or additional Employees on a survey crew shall be members of the craft. At no time will the composition of a survey party be made up of Employees who are not members of the craft. However, in the event the Employer chooses to use an Operating Engineer (already employed) as a member of a survey crew, rather than an Operating Engineer who is regularly employed as a Construction Surveyor, the Employee shall be paid according to the higher scale.

- (a) A one (1) person crew shall consist of a Party Chief. (*Total Station or similar one person survey system*).
- (b) A two (2) person survey party shall consist of a least a Party Chief and a Chainman.
- (c) A three (3) person survey party shall consist of at least a Party Chief, an Instrumentman, and a Chainman.

ARTICLE V

CLASSIFICATIONS AND WAGE SCALE

EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007

WAGE RATES

Chief of Parties	\$31.71
Party Chief	\$30.71
Instrumentman	\$28.47
Chainman	\$25.79

FRINGE BENEFITS

* Vacation	\$1.25
Health and Welfare	\$5.60
Pension-Defined Benefit	\$2.40
Pension-Defined Contribution	\$1.25
Training	\$0.50
Construction Industry Promotion (CIP)	\$0.03
Contract Admin. Fund (CAF)	\$0.03

* (Added to hourly base wage, taxed and then deducted for trust contribution, but is not computed on base wage for overtime calculation)

DEDUCTIONS

Union Dues – in accordance with Article XXXIV of the MLA.

Construction Industry Promotion (CIP) - \$0.03 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXVII of the MLA.

CLASSIFICATIONS AND WAGE SCALE

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008

WAGE RATES

Chief of Parties	\$34.55
Party Chief	\$33.55
Instrumentman	\$30.72
Chainman	\$27.94

FRINGE BENEFITS

Health and Welfare	\$6.10
Pension-Defined Benefit	\$2.40
Pension-Defined Contribution	\$1.25
Training	\$0.50
Construction Industry Promotion (CIP)	\$0.03
Contract Admin. Fund (CAF)	\$0.03

DEDUCTIONS

Vacation Savings Plan – in accordance with Article XXV of the MLA.

Union Dues – in accordance with Article XXXIV of the MLA.

Construction Industry Promotion (CIP) - \$0.03 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXVII of the MLA.

Union Programs Fund (UPF) – \$ 0.05 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXIX of the MLA.

CLASSIFICATIONS AND WAGE SCALE

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009

WAGE RATES

**4% INCREASE TO WAGE/FRINGE PACKAGE.
ALLOCATION OF WAGE/FRINGE PACKAGES
TO BE DETERMINED AT A LATER DATE.**

**REFERENCE ARTICLE I, SECTION 1.2
OF THE MASTER LABOR AGREEMENT**

Chief of Parties	
Party Chief	
Instrumentman	
Chainman	

FRINGE BENEFITS

Health and Welfare	
Pension-Defined Benefit	
Pension-Defined Contribution	
Training	
Construction Industry Promotion (CIP)	
Contract Admin. Fund (CAF)	

DEDUCTIONS

Vacation Savings Plan – in accordance with Article XXV of the MLA.

Union Dues – in accordance with Article XXXIV of the MLA.

Construction Industry Promotion (CIP) - \$0.03 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXVII of the MLA.

Union Programs Fund (UPF) – \$ 0.05 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXIX of the MLA.

CLASSIFICATIONS AND WAGE SCALE

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010

WAGE RATES

**3½% INCREASE TO WAGE/FRINGE PACKAGE.
ALLOCATION OF WAGE/FRINGE PACKAGES
TO BE DETERMINED AT A LATER DATE.**

**REFERENCE ARTICLE I, SECTION 1.2
OF THE MASTER LABOR AGREEMENT**

Chief of Parties	
Party Chief	
Instrumentman	
Chainman	

FRINGE BENEFITS

Health and Welfare	
Pension-Defined Benefit	
Pension-Defined Contribution	
Training	
Construction Industry Promotion (CIP)	
Contract Admin. Fund (CAF)	

DEDUCTIONS

Vacation Savings Plan – in accordance with Article XXV of the MLA.

Union Dues – in accordance with Article XXXIV of the MLA.

Construction Industry Promotion (CIP) - \$0.03 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXVII of the MLA.

Union Programs Fund (UPF) – \$ 0.05 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXIX of the MLA.

CLASSIFICATIONS AND WAGE SCALE

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011

WAGE RATES

**OPEN FOR MONETARY CONSIDERATIONS.
ALLOCATION OF WAGE/FRINGE PACKAGES
TO BE DETERMINED AT A LATER DATE.**

**REFERENCE ARTICLE I, SECTION 1.2
OF THE MASTER LABOR AGREEMENT**

Chief of Parties	
Party Chief	
Instrumentman	
Chainman	

FRINGE BENEFITS

Health and Welfare	
Pension-Defined Benefit	
Pension-Defined Contribution	
Training	
Construction Industry Promotion (CIP)	
Contract Admin. Fund (CAF)	

DEDUCTIONS

Vacation Savings Plan – in accordance with Article XXV of the MLA.

Union Dues – in accordance with Article XXXIV of the MLA.

Construction Industry Promotion (CIP) - \$0.03 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXVII of the MLA.

Union Programs Fund (UPF) – \$ 0.05 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXIX of the MLA.

CLASSIFICATIONS AND WAGE SCALE

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012

WAGE RATES

**OPEN FOR MONETARY CONSIDERATIONS.
ALLOCATION OF WAGE/FRINGE PACKAGES
TO BE DETERMINED AT A LATER DATE.**

**REFERENCE ARTICLE I, SECTION 1.2
OF THE MASTER LABOR AGREEMENT**

Chief of Parties	
Party Chief	
Instrumentman	
Chainman	

FRINGE BENEFITS

Health and Welfare	
Pension-Defined Benefit	
Pension-Defined Contribution	
Training	
Construction Industry Promotion (CIP)	
Contract Admin. Fund (CAF)	

DEDUCTIONS

Vacation Savings Plan – in accordance with Article XXV of the MLA.

Union Dues – in accordance with Article XXXIV of the MLA.

Construction Industry Promotion (CIP) - \$0.03 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXVII of the MLA.

Union Programs Fund (UPF) – \$ 0.05 per compensable hour – to be deducted in accordance with Article XXIX of the MLA.

SIGNATURE PAGE

FOR THE UNION:

**INTERNATIONAL UNION OF
OPERATING ENGINEERS,
LOCAL 701**

By _____
Mark Holliday,
*Business Manager &
Financial Secretary*

By _____
Nelda Wilson, *Treasurer*

FOR THE ASSOCIATION:

**OREGON-COLUMBIA
CHAPTER,
THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL
CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA,
INC.**

By _____
Joe Correy, *Chair*
*Operating Engineers Bargaining
Committee*

By _____
Bob Schommer, *Chair,*
Collective Bargaining Committee

By _____
Larry Hannan,
A.G.C. Executive Director