

Union Update

OPEIU
Local 

for OPEIU Local 8 members at Sea Mar

The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries recently raised the state's minimum salary thresholds for overtime-exempt employees. As a result, any employee earning a salary of less than \$49,831.60 per year is no longer eligible to be exempt.

What does being an "exempt" employee mean? It means you are paid an annual salary rather than an hourly wage and that you are exempt from overtime laws. At Sea Mar, exempt employees don't get paid overtime, instead they accrue an additional three (3) days of PTO per year. Also, exempt employees do not punch in and out on a time clock.

To further complicate matters, some employees within a job classification may meet (or exceed) the new threshold while others within the same classification do not. For consistency, Sea Mar won't allow any employees within a job classification to be designated as exempt unless all employees within that job classification qualify.

Which job classifications will be impacted at Sea Mar?

- SUDP II
- SUDP III
- Crisis Integration Specialist I
- Crisis Integration Specialist II*
- Health Educator I
- Health Educator II
- Integration Specialist – BH
- Integration Specialist (BA)
- Integration Specialist I (Masters/Associates License)
- Integration Specialist II (Masters/Associates License)*
- MSS Social Services Specialist

* These job classifications actually exceed the minimum threshold but Sea Mar has proposed converting them to hourly anyway. The Union has put them on notice that we don't agree. We've demanded to bargain over the change since in this case it isn't prompted by the new law.

What does changing an employee's status from exempt to hourly mean?

These employees will be required to punch in and out on a time clock to track their hours. After working forty (40) hours in a week, hourly employees are paid at the overtime rate of one and one-half times their normal hourly wage. As an hourly employee, PTO accrual will be based on tenure: less than 4 years of service: 24 days per year or 4 or more years of service: 27 days per year.

This also means if workers do not get their breaks or lunches because there isn't sufficient time between clients or because client appointments run long, workers will be entitled to pay for that time. You must complete the "Missed or Late Rest Break or Meal Period Form" and follow the instructions on the sheet to be compensated. You can find this form on Sharepoint or on OPEIU's website under "[Forms and Policies.](#)"

Workers will also be required to receive prior approval to work overtime by their supervisor, so we suggest you talk to your supervisor about what you should do if you need to work over. If you are with a client in crisis, if possible try to notify your supervisor via messaging, call or text of the situation.

We suggest you work with your supervisor on how they want to address time issues and concerns that you would normally resolve on your own by working over or adjusting your time to ensure you complete the necessary documents required by Sea Mar and their funders.

We understand these changes may cause frustration and confusion. Whether or not an employee is designated as exempt isn't necessarily the result of a decision or action taken by Sea Mar (or the Union) but rather a change in State law. However, the Union did request that all employees in the job classifications listed above be allowed to continue to track their time in the same manner they previously did and to continue to accrue PTO at the higher rate. Sea Mar did not agree.

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It will prompt you to let us know your name and where you work to make sure you get the right updates. (Message and data rates may apply).

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