

A Manager's Guide to Supporting Employees Through New FLSA Changes

As a manager or supervisor, it is imperative that you are aware of the impact the new Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) changes may have on your employees.

Employees who are being required to transition from “exempt” to “nonexempt” may perceive a loss of status and flexibility, and may have a difficult time adjusting to the new requirements. They may feel as though they have been demoted since they are now required to closely monitor their hours, whereas in the past they worked alongside other exempt co-workers for as many hours as it took to get a job done (regularly exceeding 40 hours). Others, however, may see this as a chance to earn more money for time they are away from their family and other non-work related interests.

Here are some suggestions to lessen the emotional impact these FLSA changes may have on your employees:

- Communicate to employees why this is occurring. This is not a USC policy but a federal law by which we MUST abide.
- Provide clear communication about what hours should be worked so they are aware of expectations. Instruct employees on the different types of work that is authorized outside of normal working hours, how much time is approved outside of normal working hours, and the requirement of recording all time worked especially if they have a university phone or laptop.
- Remind them of the potential benefit. If non-exempt employees work more than 40 hours in a work week, they will now be compensated in the form of overtime or compensatory time which could improve morale.
- Review how your office/department works. Ask the question – how can we work smarter? This is an opportunity for you to retool job descriptions and responsibilities of positions to lessen the impact.
- Communicate to non-exempt employees that if an email or text is sent after hours, it does not have to be read or answered immediately. The email or text can wait until the next business day so they have a more enjoyable work life balance.
- Communicate there is no change in their benefits with regards to leave, insurance or retirement.
- Be flexible with work schedules. For example, if an employee has to work late one night, you may allow them to take off a little early later in the week.

