

[DOL Announces Introduction of Smartphone Application to Help Employees Track Work Hours](#)

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Over the past several years, federal courts across the United States have experienced a surge in class action lawsuits alleging wage and hour violations by employers. In many of these cases, the primary allegation is that employees were not paid for all of their activities that are considered "compensable work" under federal regulations. An employer's failure to pay employees for short breaks and for work from home are often cited violations. In an apparent attempt to provide support for such claims, the [U.S. Department of Labor \(DOL\)](#) has announced the launch of its first application, or "app," for smartphones. The iPhone-compatible app is an electronic timesheet that is intended "to help employees independently track the hours they work and determine the wages they are owed."

The DOL announcement notes that this new technology is significant because, "instead of relying on their employers' records, workers now can keep their own records," which can "prove invaluable during [a DOL]...investigation when an employer has failed to maintain accurate employment records." The DOL further indicated that future apps may be launched to assist employees with compliance issues relating to payment of tips, commissions, bonuses, holiday pay, weekend pay, shift differential and pay for regular days of rest, as well as for impermissible pay deductions.

The introduction of the new DOL app serves to highlight the importance of carefully drafted employer wage policies and practices. Such policies include procedures for proper timekeeping, a requirement that overtime be authorized in advance, a procedure for reporting and correcting payroll errors (overpayments and underpayments) and a sound understanding by managers of what activities must be treated as paid work.

If you have any questions regarding this article or suggested wage policies, please contact any member of our [Labor and Employment Law Group](#).

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