

29 C.F.R. § 570.113

Employment “in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce”.

- (a) The term “employ” is broadly defined in section 3(g) of the Act to include “to suffer or permit to work.” The Act expressly provides that the term “employer” includes “any person acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee”. The nature of an employer-employee relationship is ordinarily to be determined not solely on the basis of the contractual relationship between the parties but also in the light of all the facts and circumstances. Moreover, the terms “employer” and “employ” as used in the Act are broader than the common-law concept of employment and must be interpreted broadly in the light of the mischief to be corrected. Thus, neither the technical relationship between the parties nor the fact that the minor is unsupervised or receives no compensation is controlling in determining whether an employer-employee relationship exists for purposes of section 12(c) of the Act. However, these are matters which should be considered along with all other facts and circumstances surrounding the relationship of the parties in arriving at such determination. The words “suffer or permit to work” include those who suffer by a failure to hinder and those who permit by acquiescence in addition to those who employ by oral or written contract. A typical illustration of employment of oppressive child labor by suffering or permitting an under-aged minor to work is that of an employer who knows that his employee is utilizing the services of such a minor as a helper or substitute in performing his employer's work. If the employer acquiesces in the practice or fails to exercise his power to hinder it, he is himself suffering or permitting the helper to work and is, therefore, employing him, within the meaning of the Act. Where employment does exist within the meaning of the Act, it must, of course, be in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce or in an enterprise engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce in order for section 12(c) to be applicable.

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