



March 2016

Dear Clients & Friends,

Spring is in the air! Bees are buzzing, blossoms are blooming, and everything seems much brighter. Spring is nature's time of renewal, and just like the seasons, our **business cycles benefit from motivation and fresh ideas** that come with the new life and awakening of spring.

During this season of renewal, it's a good time for you to **look at your operations and consider new processes** to make your employees happier while making your job easier - **Payroll and benefits are a great place to start!** Be sure to check out our **HRIS Toolbox Tip for help**. This month we highlight another valuable self-service feature available for you through our service: **Pay History and W2 Access**. If you haven't explored this feature, now is the perfect time to do so!

In addition to all the new features available within our evolving HR & Payroll System, we continue work to deliver even more benefits your way - Effective April 1, we're excited to offer **Major Medical Insurance Policies**. If you missed the news on how to sign up, please [contact us](#) today for **great coverage, tax advantaged health insurance at extremely competitive rates!** And, look for information on **Employee Practices Liability Insurance** coming next quarter. Our goal to save you time, add value to your business, and exceed your service expectations continues. **ECB is committed to cost savings, leading-edge technology, organizational solutions, and specialized guidance** through our staff experts, HR system documents, and newsletter articles such as this month's features: **Workplace Violence Prevention**, and **Compliance Review of Employee Exemptions**.

Speaking of time and value: Many of our best suggestions come from Clients. Have a suggestion for the newsletter? Is there a particular topic you'd like us to focus on in future issues? Please [email us](#) your thoughts... We'd love to hear from you!

On behalf of the entire ECB team, I can tell you that we are motivated and inspired by the opportunities that you give us to help you succeed. Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter.

Sincerely,
Don Rider
President

HRIS TOOLBOX TIP

EMPLOYEE FILES PAY HISTORY & W2 INFO.

Did you know your employees can quickly access their own pay stub, w2 info, direct deposit, tax set-up and deduction settings?

Once logged into their employee account at [ecbibbidi.com](#) - Employees can simply click the "my info" employee icon at top left of the screen. From there they will see, in left navigation bar, information that includes, check history, YTD pay, Direct Deposit and miscellaneous set-up and deductions along with their W2 info. Documents are available for multiple years - a drop down on the right side of the screen allows for selection of year.

Need more help? Please [contact us](#) with any questions or to add your worksite specific documentation to the system.

Take advantage of your ECB HR Information System to communicate workplace expectations, keep your business compliant and protect yourself against employment claims!

CLIENT *SPOTLIGHT*

We're excited to introduce several new businesses as part of our growing ECB family! **The Vacuum Center Superstore, The Great Southern Cafe, Meltdown on 30A, The Baytown Melt, The Bay South Walton, 45 Central Square,**

HR AND SAFETY INSIGHTS

PAY RATES, EXEMPTIONS AND EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS - ARE YOU COMPLIANT?

The Department of Labor ("DOL") plans to increase the minimum annual salary necessary for FLSA exemptions - currently \$455 per week (\$23,660 annually) up to over to \$50,000. The DOL final rule is due later this year. Proposed changes will inevitably affect companies' operations; and **employers that are historically more susceptible to risks associated with employee mis-classification such as those in manufacturing, non-profit, education, home health, restaurant, hospitality, and retail industries, should prepare now.** Employee mis-classifications can have costly consequences.

Unless exempt, employees covered by the The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) must receive overtime pay for all hours worked over 40 in a workweek at a rate not less than one and one-half times their regular rates of pay. FLSA establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and youth employment standards affecting employees in the private sector and in Federal, State, and local governments. **It is legally perilous to classify and pay employees based upon "common practices" and beliefs within your industry instead of following the legal requirements and limitations under the FLSA - Especially now!** With the proposed rule changes, lawsuits and DOL audits are expected to increase. **Make it a top priority to review job classifications, pay rates and how many truly exempt employees you have within your organization.**

Currently, to qualify for exemption, an employee generally must:

- Be salaried, meaning that they are paid a predetermined and fixed salary that is not subject to reduction because of variations in the quality or quantity of work performed - Currently \$455 per week, the equivalent of \$23,660 annually for a full-year employee. (Going up to over to \$50,000 with new rules proposed for end of 2016).
- Primarily perform executive, administrative, or professional duties, as provided in the Department's regulations "duties test".

Job titles DO NOT determine exempt status. The fact that a white collar employee has the title of "manager" and is paid on a salary basis does not alone provide sufficient ground to exempt that employee from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements. For an exemption to apply, an employee's specific job duties and salary must meet all of the applicable requirements provided in the Department's regulations.

Why is the Department revising its overtime regulations?

By way of this rulemaking, the Department seeks to re-establish the effectiveness of the salary level test as a ready method of drawing a line separating exempt from nonexempt employees, and to simplify the identification of overtime-eligible employees. The Department last

Blacksheep Automotive & Collision; and Marks Mobile Marine Service are the latest small businesses to implement ECB's Paperless Payroll and Employment Solutions!

These clients are maximizing the value of our systems to streamline processes and save valuable time. **We encourage you to visit these local area businesses!**



Employment Made Easy
It's About Time!



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updated the overtime regulations in 2004. Should the Department decide after consideration of comments received, the Department estimates that a 2016 level may be about \$970 a week, or \$50,440 a year.

Whether or not the proposed new rules will have a big impact on your business, changes are coming, and a thorough review of details now will save you money, time, and potential troubles later. **We recommend conducting internal audits and planning ahead to develop strategies for anticipated employee status conversions (nonexempt/exempt) or continued current status. Also, implementing comprehensive policies regarding nonexempt employees' time cards, lunch breaks, PTO, vacation, sick leave, "off the clock" work, and the like if not already established.**

For more detailed guidance on current and proposed rules visit the [DOL page here](#).

And as always, our **HR Team at ECB** is here to help! Please [contact us](#) with your particular workplace questions.

RISK MANAGEMENT & WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace violence is a growing concern for employers and employees nationwide. Millions of American workers report experiencing some form of workplace violence or threat of violence each year. Workplace violence incidents, ranging from threats and verbal abuse to sabotage, physical assaults or even homicide, can happen anytime from co-workers, customers and even strangers. Sadly, violence in the workplace is no longer uncommon.

What are some warning signs and causes?

- Loss of or fear of losing a job
- A warning or other discipline from a supervisor
- Unresolved problems with co-workers or supervisors
- Upset over recent events at work or home
- Recent change in behavior and has withdrawn from normal activities
- Intimidates, harasses or mistreats others
- Challenges authority and blames others for problems
- Uses and abuses drugs and/or alcohol
- Makes threatening references to other incidents of violence
- Makes threats to harm self and others and may have a fascination with weapons
- Angry outbursts, feels wronged, humiliated and wants revenge

What can employers do to help protect employees?

A **workplace violence prevention program** should be established. It is important that employees know the policy and understand that all claims of workplace violence will be addressed promptly. The best protection employers can offer is to establish a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace violence. Workplace violence risks can be reduced by good communication and procedures for airing and resolving problems. OSHA offers a sample prevention plan that can be tailored to your workplace [here](#).

Steps employees can take to help protect themselves?

- Report any work-related threatening or violent behavior
- Know the building's exits
- Alert security or management of strangers or former employees who should not be in the building
- Leave the workplace with co-workers

Being proactive about workplace violence prevention, preparation and response requires a multi-disciplinary approach involving management, law enforcement and all employees.