ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES
EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

TITLE: DEFINITION OF WAGE
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CHAPTER: RCW 49.46.010(7)
REPLACES: ES-003
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RCW 49.46.010(7)—Wage

Wage means compensation due to an employee as a result of employment. A wage must be paid in legal tender of the United States or by checks on banks, convertible into cash on demand at full face value. Wages may be paid by an alternative method, i.e., direct deposit, as long as there is no cost to the employee. When there is a fee or cost associated with the alternative payment method, the employee must be offered a choice of the alternative method or a payroll check.

Other items of potential value, i.e., meals and lodging, are not wages and cannot be considered part of the wages earned. This does not mean that an employer is legally restrained from deducting such items from the employee's gross wage. However, in order to be valid, such deductions must meet the requirements of RCW 49.52.060 (authorized by the employee, in writing, in advance, and accruing to the benefit of the employee).