



Employer Guide to Labor Standards Investigations

1. Initial steps and response

- Review documents received from OLS. OLS provides interpretation services in any language; please request interpretation if you need it.
- Contact the investigator if you need more time to respond, would like to discuss settlement, or have any additional questions.
- Begin gathering information that responds to the questions in the Request for Information. Find a detailed list for Employer Guidance [here](#).
- Provide requested information by the **due date indicated on the Request for Information**. You may submit your response in any of the following ways:
 - Via e-mail to the OLS investigator who has been assigned to the case.
 - A paper copy via mail or hand-delivered to OLS at 810 Third Avenue, Suite 375, Seattle, WA 98104.
 - By fax to 206-684-0332.

2. After submitting your response

- OLS may visit your business as part of its investigation. During the visit, OLS may:
 - Request to review additional records to verify the answers you submitted in your response.
 - Interview you, one or more employees, and managers.

3. After OLS's site visit

- Provide the investigator with any additional information that the investigator requested, or that you believe is important for the investigator to consider in this investigation. Review, sign, and return any interview statements the investigator prepares.
- Wait for the investigator to contact you regarding next steps. The OLS investigator may take a month or two to review the records and interview statements before proceeding with the case. After the investigator reviews what you submitted, they may request more information.
- Contact the investigator if you need more information or want to know the status of your investigation. OLS tries to complete all investigations within 180 days, but due to complexity and investigator workload some investigations may take a year or longer.

4. If you receive a subpoena

- As part of the investigation, you may get a subpoena (an order from the Seattle Hearing Examiner) ordering you to provide certain documents and/or attend an interview. OLS sends a subpoena if you do not respond to our initial attempts to contact you and obtain information. If you receive a subpoena, you still have an opportunity to complete the investigation with OLS. Respond to the subpoena by providing all requested documents and attending any scheduled interviews. If you need a different interview time or deadline, contact the OLS investigator assigned to the case.

5. Settlement

- If you are interested in settling the investigation, speak to the investigator about it at any time. Settlements will always fully compensate employees for anything that they are owed, including paying all money owed to workers, reinstating any lost PSST hours, changing workplace policies to comply with the laws that OLS enforces, and attending an OLS training on labor standards.
- You can review a template settlement agreement [here](#)¹. Depending on the issues alleged and violations found, OLS will prepare a settlement agreement based on the specific issues that our investigation reveals.
- OLS settlements include up to two years of monitoring your business to make sure that you comply with the terms of the settlement.

6. If the matter does not settle during the investigation

- OLS will complete our investigation and issue a finding. There are two types of findings: OLS will find (1) that a violation occurred or (2) that no violation occurred.
- If OLS finds no violation occurred, OLS will close the case.
- If OLS finds a violation, OLS will issue a Final Order (find a template [here](#)²), which details the due dates, amounts due, and your right to appeal.

7. After the investigation – appeals

- If OLS finds a violation, you may appeal the decision to the Seattle Office of Hearing Examiner. OLS will inform you when and how you may submit the appeal.
- If OLS finds no violation, employees may appeal the finding. OLS will inform you if it receives an employee appeal.

¹ <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/LaborStandards/PDS%20Template%204.30.17.docx>

² <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/LaborStandards/Director's%20Order%20Template%203.27.docx>

Note - The questions and answers in this document should not be used as a substitute for laws and regulations. Businesses are responsible for complying with all legal requirements.

- If you have questions about Seattle's labor standards, do not hesitate to contact the OLS business liaisons at business.laborstandards@seattle.gov or call 206-256-5297.