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# Hotel workers shorted on pay, feds say

By L.M. Sixel | December 15, 2016

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Stack of \$100 bills

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A federal investigation into pay practices at hotels in the Houston and Galveston area uncovered widespread violations of wage and hour laws, including working off the clock and failing to pay employees for mandatory training time.

The 41 investigations by the Labor Department recovered back wages and penalties totaling \$285,000 for more than 125 workers. In some cases, the amount hotel workers receive represents more than half their wages for a year.

Investigators found employees were often improperly paid straight time for overtime hours. In other instances, hotels failed to pay overtime to their employees who work at multiple locations or when employees worked dual jobs for the same employer. Other times, employers "banked" overtime hours, paying them out in future weeks as straight time.

Iris Castro, a housekeeper at the Baymont Inn of Galveston, was not paid overtime, according to the Labor Department. The hotel owes Castro \$13,000 in back wages and damages, more than half of her \$20,000 annual income.

The hotel, which is part of the Wyndham Worldwide chain, did not return a request for comment.

Ten housekeepers and maintenance employees who work at the Baymont Inn and Super 8 hotels in Galveston received \$103,000 in back wages and damages, according to the Labor Department.



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## BUSINESS

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Super 8 in Galveston said that it had no comment.

At a Galveston, Travelodge hotel, 11 employees including housekeepers, front desk and maintenance workers received nearly \$20,000 in back wages. The hotel did not return a call for comment.

The Labor Department intends to expand its hotel wage enforcement to more cities and states in the Southwest as it continues "to combat these widespread violations."



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