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individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated

8
9 **IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA**

10 **COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

11 JAIME RIVERA, individually and on behalf of
12 all others similarly situated,

13 Plaintiff(s),

14 v.

15 HADLEY TOWING EQUIPMENT, INC; and
16 DOES 1 through 100,

17 Defendant(s).

Case No. **24NWCVO2336**

COMPLAINT

1. **Failure to Provide Compliant Meal Periods**
2. **Failure to Provide Compliant Rest Periods**
3. **Failure to Pay for All Hours Worked**
4. **Failure to Pay All Overtime Owed**
5. **Failure To Reimburse Work-Related Expenses**
6. **Wage Statement Penalties**
7. **Waiting Time Penalties**
8. **Violation of Unfair Competition Law**
9. **Private Attorneys General Act**

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22 **RELEVANT PARTIES**

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24 1. Plaintiff JAIME RIVERA ("Plaintiff") is an adult resident of Los Angeles County,
25 California, and was at all times relevant residing in Los Angeles County, California.

26 2. Defendant HADLEY TOWING EQUIPMENT, INC ("Defendant") is a California
27 corporation with its principal place of business located in Los Angeles County, California.

28 Defendant is registered to and does conduct business in the State of California and is subject to the

1 laws of the State of California. All acts and omissions of Defendant employees as alleged herein
2 occurred while they were acting within the course and scope of their employment.

3 3. Plaintiff is unaware of the true names or capacities of the Defendants sued herein as DOES 1
4 through 100, inclusive (“Doe Defendants”), and therefore sues said Doe Defendants by such
5 fictitious names. Plaintiff will seek leave of this Court to amend this Complaint to insert the true
6 names and capacities of such Doe Defendants when such information has been obtained. Plaintiff is
7 informed and believes, and based on such information and belief alleges, that each of the fictitiously
8 named Doe Defendants has participated in some way in the wrongful acts and omissions alleged
9 below, and is liable to Plaintiff for damages and other relief to which Plaintiff is entitled. Defendant
10 and Doe Defendants are collectively referred to as “Defendants”.

11 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

12 4. This action is properly filed in Los Angeles County because the acts and omissions that give
13 rise to Plaintiff’s claims took place in Los Angeles County, and Defendants transact substantial
14 business in this County.

15 5. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendants because Defendants’ unlawful conduct as
16 alleged herein occurred in Los Angeles County, California and Plaintiff suffered damages from
17 such conduct within Los Angeles County, California.

18 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

19 6. At all times relevant, Plaintiff was Defendants’ employee.

20 7. Plaintiff was employed by Defendants from January 2, 2019, to March 15, 2024.

21 8. Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff with compliant meal breaks because Defendant
22 required Plaintiff to remain on call, on premises, and on duty during meal breaks. Additionally,
23 Defendant illegally rounded Plaintiff’s meal break punches, resulting in late or short meal breaks
24 that falsely appeared compliant. Despite not being provided with compliant meal breaks, Defendant
25 did not pay premium pay for these missed breaks at Plaintiff’s regular rate of pay.

26 9. Defendant failed to provide Plaintiff with compliant rest breaks because Defendant required
27 Plaintiff to remain on premises during rest breaks. Despite not being provided with compliant rest
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breaks, Defendant did not pay premium pay for these missed breaks at Plaintiff's regular rate of pay.

10. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff for all hours worked because Plaintiff was required to stay after their shift ended on the days when they were closing the facility, to do work off the clock. Additionally, although Defendant recorded Plaintiff's actual number of hours worked, Defendant chose to only display the rounded number of hours worked on Plaintiff's wage statements. As a result, Plaintiff was unable to determine from their wage statements alone whether they were being paid correctly, or whether the rounding scheme resulted in their being underpaid.

11. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff all overtime owed because Plaintiff regularly worked in excess of eight hours in a day and 40 hours in a workweek while also performing work off the clock, which therefore yielded an incorrect rate of pay for the hours actually paid.

12. Defendants failed to correctly calculate Plaintiff's regular rate of pay, and as a result, underpaid Plaintiff's overtime. Specifically, Defendants did not include all non-discretionary pay that Plaintiff earned when calculating Plaintiff's regular rate of pay.

13. Defendants failed to reimburse Plaintiff for all work-related expenses because Plaintiff was required to purchase uniforms and name tags in order to perform their work duties, but Defendants did not reimburse Plaintiff for these expenses.

14. Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff with accurate wage statements because the wage statements issued to Plaintiff did not accurately list total wages owed and hours worked, among other things.

15. Due to Defendants' failure to pay all wages due to Plaintiff during their employment, it follows that Defendant failed to pay all wages due at the conclusion of Plaintiff's employment as well. Therefore, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for waiting time penalties.

16. The applicable Wage Order provides that "[a]ll working employees shall be provided with suitable seats when the nature of the work reasonably permits the use of seats." It further states that "[w]hen employees are not engaged in the active duties of their employment and the nature of the work requires standing, an adequate number of suitable seats shall be placed in reasonable

proximity to the work area and employees shall be permitted to use such seats when it does not interfere with the performance of their duties.”

17. Here, although Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees could have performed their job duties while seated, Defendants failed to provide suitable seating. Furthermore, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees should have been provided with seats for use while not actively performing their work duties, but such seating was not provided.

PAGA ALLEGATIONS

18. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(a), any provision of the Labor Code which provides for a civil penalty to be assessed and collected by the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) for violations of the Labor Code may, as an alternative, be recovered through a civil action brought by an aggrieved employee on behalf of himself or herself and other current or former employees pursuant to the procedures outlined in Labor Code section 2699.3.

19. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, an aggrieved employee may pursue a civil action under PAGA after the following requirement have been met:

20. The aggrieved employee has provided written notice by online filing to the LWDA and by certified mail to the employer (hereinafter “Employee’s Notice”) of the specific provisions of the Labor Code alleged to have been violated, including the facts and theories to support the alleged violations; and

21. The LWDA has provided notice (hereinafter “LWDA’s Notice”) to the employer and the aggrieved employee by certified mail that it does not intend to investigate the aggrieved employee’s claims. Upon receipt of the LWDA’s Notice, or if the LWDA does not provide such Notice within 65 calendar days of the postmark date of the Employee’s Notice, the aggrieved employee may commence a civil action pursuant to Labor Code section 2699 to recover civil penalties in addition to any other penalties to which the employee may be entitled.

22. On May 9, 2024, Plaintiff provided written notice by online filing to the LWDA and by certified mail to Defendants of specific provisions of the Labor Code alleged to have been violated by Defendants, including the facts and theories to support the alleged violations.

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1 23. The 65-day notice period has elapsed, and the LWDA did not provide Plaintiff with written
2 notice that it intends to investigate the alleged violations of the Labor Code. Thus, Plaintiff seeks
3 PAGA Penalties on behalf of all Aggrieved Employees.

4 24. The Aggrieved Employees are defined as “All other nonexempt, hourly employees, current
5 and former, who were employed by Defendants within one year prior to May 9, 2024, through final
6 disposition of this action.”

7 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

8 **Failure to Provide Compliant Meal Periods**

9 **By Plaintiff Against All Defendants**

10 25. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

11 26. Labor Code section 512 and the Wage Orders provide that “an employer shall not employ an
12 employee for a work period of more than five hours per day without providing the employee with a
13 meal period of not less than 30 minutes” or “for a work period of more than 10 hours per day
14 without providing the employee with a second meal period of not less than 30 minutes”.

15 27. An employer provides compliant meal breaks to its employees “if it relieves its employees
16 of all duty, relinquishes control over their activities and permits them a reasonable opportunity to
17 take an uninterrupted 30-minute break.” (*Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Superior Court*, 53 Cal.4th
18 1004, 1040 (2012)).

19 28. Not only must an employer affirmatively relieve its employees of all duty during their meal
20 breaks, it also must not “impede or discourage” its employees from taking compliant meal breaks.
21 (*Brinker*, supra).

22 29. Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff with compliant meal breaks as alleged herein.

23 30. For each day that Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff with a compliant meal break,
24 Defendants were required to remit premium pay pursuant to Labor Code section 226.7(c), which is
25 one additional hour of pay at Plaintiff’s regular rate of pay. (*Ferra v. Loews Hollywood Hotel, LLC*,
26 11 Cal. 5th 858 (2021)).

27 31. Defendants failed to pay premium pay at Plaintiff’s regular rate of pay for each day a meal
28 break was missed.

1 32. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to recover premium pay for missed meal breaks, interest,
2 penalties, attorney fees, and costs.

3 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

4 **Failure to Provide Compliant Rest Periods**

5 **By Plaintiff Against All Defendants**

6 33. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

7 34. Labor Code section 226.7 and the Wage Orders requires employers to authorize and permit
8 its employees to take rest periods based on the total hours worked daily at the rate of 10 minutes net
9 per four hours or major fraction thereof.

10 35. Furthermore, “[d]uring rest periods employers must relieve employees of all duties and
11 relinquish control over how employees spend their time.” (*Augustus v. ABM Sec. Servs., Inc.*, 2 Cal.
12 5th 257, 269 (2016)).

13 36. Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff with compliant rest breaks as alleged herein.

14 37. For each day that Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff with a compliant rest break,
15 Defendants were required to remit premium pay pursuant to Labor Code section 226.7(c), which is
16 one additional hour of pay at Plaintiff’s regular rate of pay. (*Ferra v. Loews Hollywood Hotel, LLC*,
17 11 Cal. 5th 858 (2021)).

18 38. Defendants failed to pay premium pay at Plaintiff’s regular rate of pay for each day a rest
19 break was missed.

20 39. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to recover premium pay for missed rest breaks, interest,
21 penalties, attorney fees, and costs.

22 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

23 **Failure to Pay for All Hours Worked**

24 **By Plaintiff Against All Defendants**

25 40. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

26 41. Labor Code sections 558 and 1194 and the Wage Orders require an employer to pay
27 employees minimum wages for all hours worked fewer than eight hours in a day and/or fewer than
28 40 hours in a workweek.

42. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff for all hours worked as alleged herein.

43. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to recover all unpaid wages, liquidated damages, interest, penalties, attorney fees, and costs.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Failure to Pay All Overtime Owed

By Plaintiff Against All Defendants

44. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

45. Labor Code section 510 provides that “[a]ny work in excess of eight hours in one workday and any work in excess of 40 hours in any one workweek and the first eight hours worked on the seventh day of work in any one workweek shall be compensated at the rate of no less than one and one-half times the regular rate of pay for an employee.”

46. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff all overtime wages owed as alleged herein.

47. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to recover all unpaid overtime wages, liquidated damages, interest, penalties, attorney fees, and costs.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Failure To Reimburse Work-Related Expenses

By Plaintiff Against All Defendants

48. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

49. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2802, an employer shall indemnify his or her employee for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the employee's discharge of his or her duties.

50. Defendants failed to reimburse Plaintiff for all work-related expenses as alleged herein.

51. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to reimbursement for all work-related expenses, penalties, attorney fees, and costs.

SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Wage Statement Penalties

By Plaintiff Against All Defendants

52. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

1 53. Labor Code section 226(a) requires employers to provide itemized wage statements to its
2 employees that identify accurate information regarding their compensation. Defendants, as a matter
3 of policy and practice, failed in its affirmative obligation to provide accurate itemized wage
4 statements to Plaintiff in violation of Labor Code section 226(a).

5 54. As alleged herein, the wage statements that Defendants issued to Plaintiff were inaccurate
6 and incomplete.

7 55. Defendants knowingly and intentionally issued wage statements that were inaccurate and
8 incomplete, and the issuance of inaccurate and incomplete wage statements caused injury to
9 Plaintiff in that Plaintiff was unable to accurately verify and/or calculate their wages.

10 56. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to the recovery of wage statement penalties, attorney fees, and
11 costs.

12 **SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

13 **Waiting Time Penalties**

14 **By Plaintiff Against All Defendants**

15 57. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

16 58. Labor Code sections 201 and 202 require that an employer provide an employee with all
17 wages due and payable either: (a) immediately upon termination, or (b) within 3 days of the
18 employee's resignation.

19 59. Labor Code section 203 provides that if an employer willfully fails to pay wages owed in
20 accordance with Labor Code sections 201 or 202, then the wages of the employee continue as a
21 penalty from the due date at the same rate until paid or until an action is commenced, not to exceed
22 thirty days.

23 60. As alleged herein, Defendants willfully did not pay Plaintiff all wages owed at the
24 conclusion of employment.

25 61. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to the recovery of waiting time penalties, interest, attorney fees,
26 and costs.

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1 **EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **Violation of Unfair Competition Law**

3 **By Plaintiff Against All Defendants**

4 62. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

5 63. Defendants' conduct described herein constitutes unfair competition.

6 64. Specifically, Defendants have gained an unfair advantage over other similarly situated
7 businesses by unlawfully reducing their overhead costs by not paying their employees what they are
8 owed.

9 65. Pursuant to Business and Professions Code 17203, Plaintiff is entitled to restitution of all
10 wrongfully withheld wages.

11 66. Plaintiff may recover attorney fees pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5.

12 **NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

13 **Private Attorneys General Act**

14 **By Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees Against All Defendants**

15 67. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

16 68. PAGA permits Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to recover civil penalties for the
17 violation(s) of the Labor Code.

18 69. As alleged herein, Defendants' conduct violates numerous sections of the Labor Code.

19 70. With respect to violations of Labor Code sections 226.7 and 558 for Defendants' failure to
20 provide Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees with compliant meal periods or compensation in
21 lieu thereof, the penalties in Labor Code sections 558 and 2699 apply.

22 71. With respect to violations of Labor Code section 226.7 for Defendants' failure to provide
23 Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees with compliant rest periods or compensation in lieu thereof,
24 the penalties in Labor Code section 2699 apply.

25 72. With respect to violations of Labor Code section 1197 for Defendants' failure to compensate
26 Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for all minimum wages earned, the penalties in Labor Code
27 sections 1197.1 and 2699 apply.

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1 73. With respect to violations of Labor Code section 510 for Defendants' failure to compensate
2 Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for all overtime wages earned, the penalties in Labor Code
3 sections 558, 1197.1, and 2699 apply.

4 74. With respect to violations of Labor Code section 226(a) for failure to provide accurate wage
5 statements to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees, the penalties in Labor Code sections 226.3
6 and 2699 apply.

7 75. With respect to violations of Labor Code section 203 for failure to pay all wages due to
8 Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees and the conclusion of their employment, the penalties in
9 Labor Code section 2699 apply.

10 76. With respect to violations of Labor Code section 2802 for failure to reimburse Plaintiff and
11 the Aggrieved Employees for all work-related expenses, the penalties in Labor Code section 2699
12 apply.

13 77. With respect to violations of Labor Code section 1198 and the relevant wage order for
14 failure to provide Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees with suitable seating, the penalties in
15 Labor Code section 2699 apply.

16 78. Additionally, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees are entitled to attorney's fees pursuant
17 to Labor Code section 2699(g).

18 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

19 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendants as follows:

20 **First Cause of Action**

- 21 1. Damages and/or penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 226.7
- 22 2. Interest
- 23 3. Attorneys' fees
- 24 4. Costs
- 25 5. Other relief the court deems proper

26 **Second Cause of Action**

- 27 1. Damages and/or penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 226.7
- 28 2. Interest

- 1 3. Attorneys' fees
2 4. Costs
3 5. Other relief the court deems proper

4 Third Cause of Action

- 5 1. Damages and/or penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558, 1194, 1197, and 1197.1
6 2. Liquidated damages
7 3. Interest
8 4. Attorneys' fees
9 5. Costs
10 6. Other relief the court deems proper

11 Fourth Cause of Action

- 12 1. Damages and/or penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 510, 558, and 1194
13 2. Interest
14 3. Attorneys' fees
15 4. Costs
16 5. Other relief the court deems proper

17 Fifth Cause of Action

- 18 1. Reimbursement of all work-related expenses
19 2. Attorneys' fees
20 3. Costs
21 4. Other relief the court deems proper

22 Sixth Cause of Action

- 23 1. Penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 226
24 2. Attorneys' fees
25 3. Costs
26 4. Other relief the court deems proper

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1 Seventh Cause of Action

- 2 1. Penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 203
3 2. Attorneys' fees
4 3. Costs
5 4. Other relief the court deems proper

6 Eighth Cause of Action

- 7 1. Restitution of all wrongfully withheld wages
8 2. Attorneys' fees
9 3. Costs
10 4. Other relief the court deems proper

11 Ninth Cause of Action

- 12 1. All applicable civil penalties available pursuant to Labor Code section 2698, et seq.
13 2. Attorneys' fees
14 3. Costs
15 4. Other relief the court deems proper

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17 DATED: July 31, 2024

FRONTIER LAW CENTER

18 /s/ Daniel Ginzburg

Daniel Ginzburg

19 Attorneys for Plaintiff
20 JAIME RIVERA,
21 individually and on behalf of all others
22 similarly situated
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