

HAINES LAW GROUP, APC
Paul K. Haines (SBN 248226)
phaines@haineslawgroup.com
Sean M. Blakely (SBN 264384)
sblakely@haineslawgroup.com
Joel M. Gordon (SBN 280721)
jgordon@haineslawgroup.com
2155 Campus Drive, Suite 180
El Segundo, California 90245
Tel: (424) 292-2350
Fax: (424) 292-2355
Attorneys for Plaintiff

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA**

WILLIAM BOWEN, as an individual and on
behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

THE F. A. BARTLETT TREE EXPERT
COMPANY, a Connecticut Corporation; and
DOES 1 through 100, inclusive,

Defendants.

CASE NO. 24CV05757

**FIRST AMENDED CLASS AND
REPRESENTATIVE ACTION
COMPLAINT:**

- (1) **MINIMUM WAGE VIOLATIONS
(LABOR CODE §§ 1182.12, 1194,
1194.2, 1197, 1198);**
- (2) **FAILURE TO PAY ALL OVERTIME
WAGES (LABOR CODE §§ 204, 510,
1194, 1198);**
- (3) **MEAL PERIOD VIOLATIONS
(LABOR CODE §§ 226.7, 512, 558);**
- (4) **REST PERIOD VIOLATIONS
(LABOR CODE §§ 226.7, 516, 558);**
- (5) **FAILURE TO REIMBURSE FOR ALL
NECESSARY BUSINESS
EXPENDITURES (LABOR CODE §§
2802, 2804);**
- (6) **WAGE STATEMENT PENALTIES
(LABOR CODE §§ 226 *et seq.*, 1174(d));**
- (7) **WAITING TIME PENALTIES
(LABOR CODE §§ 201-203);**
- (8) **UNFAIR COMPETITION (BUS &
PROF CODE § 17200 *et seq.*); and**

**(9) CIVIL PENALTIES UNDER THE
PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL
ACT (LABOR CODE § 2698 *et seq.*).**

**DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL
UNLIMITED CIVIL CASE**

1 Plaintiff William Bowen (“Plaintiff”), on behalf of himself and all others similarly
2 situated, hereby brings this Class and Representative Action Complaint (“Complaint”) against
3 Defendants The F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company, a Connecticut Corporation; and DOES 1 to
4 100, inclusive (collectively “Defendants”), and on information and belief alleges as follows:

5 **JURISDICTION**

6 1. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated, hereby brings this
7 Complaint for recovery of unpaid wages and penalties under California Business and Professions
8 Code § 17200 *et. seq.*, Labor Code §§ 201-204, 226, 226.7, 510, 512, 516, 558, 1174, 1182.12,
9 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1198, 2802, 2804, 2698 *et seq.*, and Industrial Welfare Commission Wage
10 Order 5 (“Wage Order 5”), in addition to seeking injunctive relief, declaratory relief, and
11 restitution. This Complaint is brought pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure § 382. This
12 Court has jurisdiction over Defendants’ violations of the California Labor Code because the
13 amount in controversy exceeds this Court's jurisdictional minimum.

14 **VENUE**

15 2. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to California Code of Civil
16 Procedure sections 395(a) and 395.5 in that liability arose in this county because at least some of
17 the transactions that are the subject of this Complaint occurred therein and/or each defendant is
18 found, maintains offices, transacts business, or has an agent therein.

19 3. Venue is proper in Santa Barbara County because Defendants are a foreign
20 corporation with a principal place of business in Connecticut, and have not filed a statement with
21 the California Secretary of State designating a principal office in California. As such, venue is
22 proper in any county in the state of California. *See Easton v. Sup. Ct.*, (1970) 12 Cal.App.3d 243,
23 246-47 (“[Defendant’s] status is that of a foreign corporation only. As such, it may be sued in any
24 county in the state.”).

25 **PARTIES**

26 4. Plaintiff is, and at all times relevant herein was, an individual over the age of
27 eighteen (18). At all relevant times herein, Plaintiff was, and currently is, a California resident.
28 Within the statute of limitations periods applicable to each cause of action pled herein, Plaintiff

1 was employed by Defendants as a non-exempt employee. Plaintiff was, and is, a victim of
2 Defendants' policies and/or practices complained of herein, lost money and/or property, and has
3 been deprived of the rights guaranteed by California Business and Professions Code § 17200 *et*.
4 *seq.*, Labor Code §§ 201-204, 226, 226.7, 510, 512, 516, 558, 1174, 1182.12, 1194, 1194.2, 1197,
5 1198, 2802, 2804, 2698 *et seq.*, and Wage Order 5, which sets employment standards for the
6 public housekeeping industry, including tree service firms and landscaping businesses.

7 5. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that during the
8 applicable statute of limitations for each cause of action pled herein and continuing to the present,
9 Defendants engaged in and continue to engage in tree and shrub care around the world for
10 residential, commercial, and government clients, and employed Plaintiff and other, similarly-
11 situated non-exempt employees within Santa Barbara County, and the State of California and,
12 therefore, were (and are) doing business in Santa Barbara County and the State of California.

13 6. Plaintiff does not know the true names or capacities, whether individual, partner,
14 or corporate, of the defendants sued herein as DOES 1 to 100, inclusive, and for that reason, said
15 defendants are sued under such fictitious names, and Plaintiff will seek leave from this Court to
16 amend this Complaint when such true names and capacities are discovered. Plaintiff is informed,
17 and believes, and based thereon alleges, that each of said fictitious defendants, whether individual,
18 partners, or corporate, were responsible in some manner for the acts and omissions alleged herein,
19 and proximately caused Plaintiff and the Classes (as defined in Paragraph 17) to be subject to the
20 unlawful employment practices, wrongs, injuries and damages complained of herein.

21 7. Plaintiff is informed, and believes, and thereon alleges, that at all times mentioned
22 herein, Defendants were and are the employers of Plaintiff and all members of the Classes.

23 8. At all relevant times, each of said Defendants participated in the doing of the acts
24 hereinafter alleged to have been done by the named Defendants; and furthermore, the Defendants,
25 and each of them, were the agents, servants, and employees of each and every one of the other
26 Defendants, as well as the agents of all Defendants, and at all times herein mentioned were acting
27 within the course and scope of said agency and employment. Defendants, and each of them,
28 approved of, condoned, and/or otherwise ratified each and every one of the acts or omissions

1 complained of herein.

2 9. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants, and each of them, were members of
3 and engaged in a joint venture, partnership, and common enterprise, and acting within the course
4 and scope of and in pursuance of said joint venture, partnership, and common enterprise. Further,
5 Plaintiff alleges that all Defendants were joint employers for all purposes of Plaintiff and all
6 members of the Classes.

7 **GENERAL FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

8 10. Defendants provide residential and commercial tree and shrub care and property
9 maintenance. Plaintiff worked for Defendants in Santa Barbara County as a non-exempt “crew
10 leader” (or similarly titled position) from approximately July 31, 2023, until approximately July
11 19, 2024.

12 11. During Plaintiff’s employment with Defendants, Defendants failed to compensate
13 Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees for all minimum and overtime wages due to
14 Defendants’ unlawful timekeeping policies and practices, which failed to accurately record all
15 hours worked. Rather than allowing Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees to punch in and
16 out during work hours, Plaintiff’s supervisors, including Asher Gotzmer, instructed Plaintiff and
17 other non-exempt employees to write down hours at the end of the workday that always began
18 with employees’ scheduled 7:00 a.m. start time, regardless of when employees actually started
19 working. In fact, Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were required to arrive approximately
20 15-30 minutes before 7:00 a.m. in order to be in their uniforms and protective gear by the
21 scheduled start time, and Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were not compensated for the
22 time worked prior to their scheduled shifts. When Plaintiff submitted a daily timesheet that did
23 not conform to his supervisors’ timekeeping practices, the supervisors required Plaintiff to
24 retroactively adjust his timesheets at the end of the week to reflect those practices, regardless of
25 when Plaintiff actually started work on those days. As a result, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff
26 and other non-exempt employees minimum and overtime wages for all hours worked.

27 12. Throughout Plaintiff’s and other non-exempt employees’ employment with
28 Defendants, Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were not provided with a full 30 minutes

of net rest for their meal periods. Defendants' timekeeping policies, as described above, extended to their meal period policies and practices, wherein Defendants did not permit Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees to punch in and out during their actual meal periods, but instructed them at the end of each day to write down exactly 30 minutes for meal periods between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., whether or not the employees were actually permitted to take meal periods. In fact, due to work demands, Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were almost never provided with first meal periods commencing before the end of the fifth hour due to work demands. Defendants also prevented Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees from using the bathroom during their meal periods. Defendants also required Plaintiff to travel between job sites during his purported lunch periods, resulting in time worked for which he was not compensated. Defendants also failed to provide Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees with a second duty-free full 30-minute meal period for shifts of over 10.0 hours in violation of California law. On occasions when Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees did not receive a second meal period, they were instructed by supervisors either to record a 30-minute meal period they were not permitted to take, or they were instructed to record fewer than 10.0 hours worked in order to make it seem as if the employees were not eligible for the second meal period. When Plaintiff submitted a daily timesheet that did not conform to his supervisors' meal period practices, the supervisors required Plaintiff to retroactively adjust his timesheet at the end of the week to reflect compliant 30-minute meal periods after the fifth and tenth hours of work, whether or not Plaintiff was actually permitted to take these meal periods. Further, on those occasions when Defendants failed to provide a legally complaint meal period to Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees, Defendants failed to compensate Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees with the required meal period premium for each workday in which they experienced a meal period violation as mandated by Labor Code § 226.7. Upon information and belief, during at least a portion of the putative class period, Defendants maintained no payroll code or other mechanism for paying meal period premiums under Labor Code § 226.7 in the event a legally compliant meal period was not provided to their non-exempt employees

13. Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were also not authorized and permitted

1 to take all legally required and compliant rest periods because Defendants failed to provide at
2 least 10 minutes of net rest in an area appropriate for rest away from the workstation. Specifically,
3 as a result of the work demands imposed by Defendants, Defendants did not authorize and permit
4 one rest period for every four hours worked, or major fraction thereof, as non-exempt employees
5 were often working up in a tree and unable to take a rest period. Defendants also prevented
6 Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees from using the bathroom during their rest periods.
7 Despite failing to authorize and permit Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees to take all rest
8 periods to which they are entitled, upon information and belief, during at least a portion of the
9 relevant time period, Defendants maintained no mechanism for the payment of rest period
10 premium payments as required by Labor Code § 226.7 and did not pay Plaintiff or other non-
11 exempt employees any rest period premiums.

12 14. During Plaintiff's employment with Defendants, Plaintiff and other non-exempt
13 employees were required to use their personal cellular phones to communicate with other
14 employees, managers/supervisors, and/or clients. Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were
15 also required to provide their own safety boots. Defendants knew or should have known that
16 Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were necessarily incurring expenses due to the use of
17 their personal cellular phones and safety boots. Yet, despite the necessity of Plaintiff and other
18 non-exempt employees using their personal cellular phones and safety boots for work activities
19 and Defendants knowing or should have knowing about the same, Defendants failed to reimburse
20 Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees for these necessary business expenditures.

21 15. As a result of Defendants' failure to compensate Plaintiff and other non-exempt
22 employees for all minimum and overtime wages, and all meal and rest period premium wages,
23 Defendants maintained inaccurate payroll records and failed to issue accurate, compliant,
24 itemized wage statements.

25 16. As a further result of Defendants' failure to pay all minimum and overtime wages,
26 and failure to pay all meal and rest period premium wages, Defendants failed to pay all wages to
27 Plaintiff and other formerly employed non-exempt employees at the separation of their
28 employment.

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

17. **Class Definitions:** Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of himself and the following Classes pursuant to § 382 of the Code of Civil Procedure:

- a. The Minimum Wage Class consists of all of Defendants' current and former non-exempt employees in California who were subject to Defendants' timekeeping policies and/or practices, during the four years immediately preceding the filing of this action through the present.
- b. The Overtime Class consists of all of Defendants' current and former non-exempt employees in California who worked more than 8.0 hours per day and/or 40.0 hours per week and were subject to Defendants' timekeeping policies and/or practices, during the four years immediately preceding the filing of this action through the present.
- c. The Meal Period Class consists of all of Defendants' current and former non-exempt employees in California who: (i) worked at least one shift in excess of 5.0 hours; and/or (ii) worked at least one shift in excess of 10.0 hours during the four years immediately preceding the filing of this action through the present.
- d. The Rest Period Class consists of all of Defendants' current and former non-exempt employees in California who worked at least one shift in excess of 3.5 hours, during the four years immediately preceding the filing of this action through the present.
- e. The Employee Expense Class consists of all of Defendants' current and former non-exempt employees in California who were not reimbursed for the use of their personal cellular phones and work boots for business purposes, during the four years immediately preceding the filing of this action through the present.
- f. The Wage Statement Class consists of all of the Minimum Wage Class, Overtime Class, Meal Period Class, and/or Rest Period Class, who received a wage statement from Defendants at any time during the one year immediately preceding the filing of this action through the present.

g. The Waiting Time Class consists of all members of the Minimum Wage Class, Overtime Class, Meal Period Class, and/or Rest Period Class, who separated their employment with Defendants during the three years immediately preceding the filing of this action through the present.

18. **Numerosity/Ascertainability:** The members of the Classes are so numerous that joinder of all members would be unfeasible and not practicable. The membership of the Classes and Subclasses are unknown to Plaintiff at this time; however, it is estimated that the members of the Classes number greater than one hundred (100) individuals. The identity of such membership is readily ascertainable via inspection of Defendants' employment records.

19. **Common Questions of Law and Fact Predominate/Well Defined Community of Interest:** There are common questions of law and fact as to Plaintiff and all other similarly situated employees, which predominate over questions affecting only individual members including, without limitation to:

- i. Whether Defendants' timekeeping policies and/or practices resulted in the failure to properly compensate members of the Minimum and Overtime Wage Classes for all hours actually worked;
- ii. Whether Defendants properly paid all overtime wages to members of the Overtime Class;
- iii. Whether Defendants provided all legally compliant meal periods to members of the Meal Period Class pursuant to Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512;
- iv. Whether Defendants authorized and permitted all legally compliant rest periods to members of the Rest Period Class pursuant to Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 516;
- v. Whether Defendants provided meal and rest period premium payments for non-compliant meal and rest periods;
- vi. Whether Defendants failed to reimburse members of the Employee Expense Class for necessary work expenses;
- vii. Whether Defendants furnished legally compliant wage statements to members of the Wage Statement Class pursuant to Labor Code § 226; and

viii. Whether Defendants paid all wages/compensation due upon separation to members of the Waiting Time Class as required under California law.

20. **Predominance of Common Questions:** Common questions of law and fact predominate over questions that affect only individual members of the Classes. The common questions of law set forth above are numerous and substantial and stem from Defendants' policies and/or practices applicable to each individual class member, including but not limited to Defendants' timekeeping policies/practices, and meal and rest period policies/practices. As such, the common questions predominate over individual questions concerning each individual class member's showing as to their eligibility for recovery or as to the amount of their damages.

21. **Typicality:** The claims of Plaintiff are typical of the claims of the Classes because Plaintiff was employed by Defendants as a non-exempt employee in California during the statute(s) of limitations period applicable to each cause of action pled in the Complaint. As alleged herein, Plaintiff, like the members of the Classes, was not paid all minimum and overtime wages owed due to Defendants' timekeeping policies/practices, was not provided all required meal periods, was not authorized and permitted all rest periods, did not receive premium pay for non-compliant meal and rest periods, was not reimbursed for all necessary business expenditures, was not provided with accurate, compliant, itemized wage statements, and was not paid all wages owed at his time of separation from employment.

22. **Adequacy of Representation:** Plaintiff is fully prepared to take all necessary steps to represent fairly and adequately the interests of the members of the Classes. Moreover, Plaintiff's attorneys are ready, willing and able to fully and adequately represent the members of the Classes and Plaintiff. Plaintiff's attorneys have prosecuted and defended numerous wage-and-hour class actions in state and federal courts in the past and are committed to vigorously prosecuting this action on behalf of the members of the Classes.

23. **Superiority:** The California Labor Code is broadly remedial in nature and serves an important public interest in establishing minimum working conditions and standards in California. These laws and labor standards protect the average working employee from exploitation by employers who have the responsibility to follow the laws and who may seek to

1 take advantage of superior economic and bargaining power in setting onerous terms and
2 conditions of employment. The nature of this action and the format of laws available to Plaintiff
3 and members of the Classes make the class action format a particularly efficient and appropriate
4 procedure to redress the violations alleged herein. If each employee were required to file an
5 individual lawsuit, Defendants would necessarily gain an unconscionable advantage since they
6 would be able to exploit and overwhelm the limited resources of each individual plaintiff with
7 their vastly superior financial and legal resources. Moreover, requiring each member of the
8 Class(es) to pursue an individual remedy would also discourage the assertion of lawful claims by
9 employees who would be disinclined to file an action against their former and/or current employer
10 for real and justifiable fear of retaliation and permanent damages to their careers at subsequent
11 employment. Further, the prosecution of separate actions by the individual class members, even
12 if possible, would create a substantial risk of inconsistent or varying verdicts or adjudications
13 with respect to the individual class members against Defendants herein; and which would
14 establish potentially incompatible standards of conduct for Defendants; and/or legal
15 determinations with respect to individual class members which would, as a practical matter, be
16 dispositive of the interest of the other class members not parties to adjudications or which would
17 substantially impair or impede the ability of the class members to protect their interests. Further,
18 the claims of the individual members of the Class are not sufficiently large to warrant vigorous
19 individual prosecution considering all of the concomitant costs and expenses attending thereto.
20 As such, the Classes identified in Paragraph 17 are maintainable as classes under § 382 of the
21 Code of Civil Procedure.

22 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

23 **MINIMUM WAGE VIOLATIONS**

24 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

25 24. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

26 25. Wage Order 5, § 4 and California Labor Code §§ 1197 and 1182.12 establish the
27 right of employees to be paid minimum wages for all hours worked, in amounts set by state law.
28 Labor Code §§ 1194(a) and 1194.2(a) provide that an employee who has not been paid the legal

1 minimum wage as required by Labor Code § 1197 may recover the unpaid balance together with
2 attorneys' fees and costs of suit, as well as liquidated damages in an amount equal to the unpaid
3 wages and interest accrued thereon. At all relevant times herein, Defendants failed to conform its
4 pay practices to the requirements of the law by failing to pay Plaintiff and members of the
5 Minimum Wage Class for all hours worked, including, but not limited to, all hours they were
6 subject to the control of Defendants and/or suffered or permitted to work under the California
7 Labor Code and Wage Order 5.

8 26. California Labor Code § 1198 makes unlawful the employment of an employee
9 under conditions that the IWC prohibits. California Labor Code §§ 1194(a) and 1194.2(a) provide
10 that an employer who has failed to pay its employees the legal minimum wage is liable to pay
11 those employees the unpaid balance of the unpaid wages as well as liquidated damages in an
12 amount equal to the wages due and interest thereon.

13 27. As a consequence of Defendants' non-payment of minimum wages, Plaintiff and
14 members of the Minimum Wage Class seek penalties pursuant to Wage Order 5 § 20(a) and
15 California Labor Code § 1199; interest pursuant to California Labor Code §§ 218.6 and 1194 and
16 Civil Code §§ 3287 and 3289; liquidated damages pursuant to California Labor Code § 1194.2;
17 attorneys' fees and costs of suit pursuant to California Labor Code § 1194 *et seq.*; and damages
18 and/or penalties pursuant to California Labor Code § 558(a).

19 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

20 **FAILURE TO PAY ALL OVERTIME WAGES**

21 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

22 28. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

23 29. This cause of action is brought pursuant to Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 1194, and
24 1198, which provide that non-exempt employees are entitled to all overtime wages and
25 compensation for all overtime hours worked and provide a private right of action for the failure
26 to pay all overtime compensation for overtime work performed.

27 30. At all relevant times, Defendants were required to compensate hourly non-exempt
28 employees, including Plaintiff and members of the Overtime Class, for all overtime hours worked

pursuant to California Labor Code § 1194 and IWC Wage Order No. 5. Wage Order 5, § 3(B) requires an employer to pay an employee “one and one-half (1½) times such employee’s regular rate of pay” for work in excess of 8 hours per work day and/or in excess of 40 hours in a workweek. Labor Code § 510 and Wage Order 5, Section 3 also require an employer to pay an employee double the employee’s regular rate of work in excess of 12 hours each workday and/or any work in excess of eight (8) hours on the seventh day of the workweek. As alleged herein, Defendants caused Plaintiff and the members of the Overtime Class to work overtime and/or double-time hours but did not properly compensate Plaintiff and the members of the Overtime Class at one and one-half times their regular rate of pay (or double-time, in the case of double-time hours) for such hours.

31. The foregoing policies and practices are unlawful and create entitlement to recovery by Plaintiff and the Overtime Class members in a civil action for the unpaid amount of overtime premiums owing, including interest thereon, statutory penalties, attorneys’ fees, and costs of suit according to California Labor Code §§ 204, 210, 216, 218.6, 510, 1194, and 1198; Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5; and Civil Code §§ 3287 and 3289.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

MEAL PERIOD VIOLATIONS

(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)

32. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

33. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants failed in their affirmative obligation to provide all of their non-exempt employees in California, including Plaintiff and members of the Meal Period Class, with all legally compliant meal periods in accordance with the mandates of the California Labor Code and Wage Order 5, § 11. Despite Defendants’ violations, Defendants did not pay an additional hour of pay to Plaintiff and members of the Meal Period Class at their respective regular rates of compensation, in accordance with California Labor Code §§ 204, 210, 226.7, and 512.

34. As a result, Defendants are responsible for paying premium compensation for meal period violations including interest thereon, statutory penalties, civil penalties, and costs of suit,

pursuant to Labor Code §§ 226.7, 512, 558, Wage Order 5, and Civil Code §§ 3287(b) and 3289.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

REST PERIOD VIOLATIONS

(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)

35. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

36. Wage Order 5, § 12 and California Labor Code §§ 226.7, 516 and 558 establish the right of employees to be provided with a rest period of at least ten (10) minutes for each four (4) hour period worked, or major fraction thereof. Despite Defendants' failure to authorize and permit Plaintiff and members of the Rest Period Class to take all legally complaint rest periods as alleged herein, Defendants did not pay these individuals an additional hour of pay at their respective regular rate for the rest periods that they failed to authorize and permit them to take, as required by Labor Code § 226.7.

37. Defendants' policies and practices described herein are unlawful and create an entitlement to recovery by Plaintiff and members of the Rest Period Class in a civil action for the unpaid amount of rest period premiums owing, including interests thereon, statutory penalties, civil penalties, attorneys' fees, and costs of suit according to California Labor Code §§ 226.7, 516, 558, Wage Order 5, and Civil Code §§ 3287(b) and 3289.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

FAILURE TO REIMBURSE FOR ALL NECESSARY BUSINESS EXPENDITURES

(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)

38. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

39. At all relevant times herein, Defendants were subject to Labor Code § 2802, which states that "an employer shall indemnify his or her employees for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of his or her duties, or of his or her obedience to the directions of the employer."

40. At all relevant times herein, Defendants were subject to Labor Code § 2804, which states that "any contract or agreement, express or implied, made by any employee to waive the benefits of this article or any part thereof, is null and void, and this article shall not deprive any

employee or his personal representative of any right or remedy to which he is entitled under the laws of this State.”

41. Due to Defendants’ unlawful policy and practice of requiring employees to use their personal cellular phones and purchase their own work boots for work purposes and failing to compensate employees, Defendants have violated Labor Code § 2802.

42. As a proximate result of Defendants’ policies and/or practices in violation of Labor Code §§ 2802 and 2804, Plaintiff and members of the Employee Expense Class suffered damages in sums, which will be shown according to proof.

43. Plaintiff and members of the Employee Expense Class are entitled to attorneys’ fees and costs of suit pursuant to Labor Code § 2802(c) for bringing this action.

44. Pursuant to Labor Code §2802(b), any action brought for the reimbursement of necessary expenditures carries interest at the same rate as judgments in civil actions. Thus, Plaintiff and members of the Employee Expense Class are entitled to interest, which shall accrue from the date on which they incurred the initial necessary expenditure.

SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

WAGE STATEMENT VIOLATIONS

(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)

45. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

46. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants knowingly and intentionally, as a matter of uniform policy and practice, failed to furnish Plaintiff and members of the Wage Statement Class with accurate and complete, itemized wage statements that included, among other requirements, all hours worked, total gross wages earned, all rates of pay and corresponding number of hours worked, total net wages earned, and the correct name and address of the legal entity that is the employer in violation of Labor Code § 226 *et seq.*

47. Defendants’ failure to furnish Plaintiff and members of the Wage Statement Class with accurate and complete, itemized wage statements resulted in actual injury, as said failures led to, among other things, the non-payment of minimum and overtime wages and meal and rest period premium wages owed and deprived them of the information necessary to identify the

1 discrepancies in Defendants' reported data.

2 48. Defendants' failures create an entitlement to recovery by Plaintiff and members of
3 the Wage Statement Class in a civil action for all damages and/or penalties pursuant to Labor
4 Code § 226 *et seq.*, including statutory penalties, civil penalties, reasonable attorneys' fees, and
5 costs of suit according to California Labor Code § 226 *et seq.*

6 **SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

7 **WAITING TIME PENALTIES**

8 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

9 49. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates all previous paragraphs.

10 50. This cause of action is brought pursuant to Labor Code §§ 201-203, which require
11 an employer to pay all wages earned immediately at the time of separation of employment in the
12 event the employer discharges the employee, or if the employee provides at least 72 hours of
13 notice of his/her intent to quit. In the event the employee provides less than 72 hours of his/her
14 intent to quit, said employee's wages become due and payable no later than 72 hours upon said
15 employee's last date of employment.

16 51. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
17 failed to timely pay Plaintiff and members of the Waiting Time Class all final wages due to them
18 at the time of their separation, which includes, among other things, underpaid minimum and
19 overtime wages, and meal and rest period premium wages. Further, Plaintiff is informed and
20 believes, and based thereon alleges, that as a matter of uniform policy and practice, Defendants
21 continue to fail to pay members of the Waiting Time Class all earned wages at the end of
22 employment in a timely manner pursuant to Labor Code §§ 201-203. Defendants' failure to pay
23 all final wages was willful within the meaning of Labor Code § 203.

24 52. Defendants' willful failure to timely pay Plaintiff and members of the Waiting
25 Time Class their earned wages upon separation from employment, results in a continued payment
26 of wages up to thirty (30) days from the time the wages were due. Therefore, Plaintiff and
27 members of the Waiting Time Class are entitled to compensation pursuant to Labor Code § 203,
28 plus reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit.

1 **EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **UNFAIR COMPETITION**

3 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

4 53. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

5 54. Defendants have engaged and continue to engage in unfair and/or unlawful
6 business practices in California in violation of California Business and Professions Code § 17200
7 *et seq.*, by: (a) failing to pay Plaintiff and members of the Minimum Wage Class all minimum
8 wages owed; (b) failing to pay Plaintiff and members of the Overtime Class all overtime wages
9 owed; (c) failing to provide Plaintiff and members of the Meal Period Class with all meal periods
10 to which they are entitled, and failing to pay them meal period premium payments; (d) failing to
11 authorize and permit Plaintiff and members of the Rest Period Class all rest periods to which they
12 are entitled, and failing to pay them rest period premium payments; (e) failing to reimburse the
13 Employee expense Class for all necessary business expenditures; (f) failing to issue accurate and
14 itemized wage statements to the Wage Statement Class; and (h) failing to pay the Waiting Time
15 Class all final wages at the time of separation from employment.

16 55. Defendants' utilization of these unfair and/or unlawful business practices deprived
17 Plaintiff and continues to deprive members of the Classes of compensation to which they are
18 legally entitled, constitutes unfair and/or unlawful competition, and provides an unfair advantage
19 over Defendants' competitors who have been and/or are currently employing workers and
20 attempting to do so in honest compliance with applicable wage and hour laws.

21 56. Because Plaintiff is a victim of Defendants' unfair and/or unlawful conduct alleged
22 herein, Plaintiff for himself and on behalf of the members of the Classes, seeks full restitution of
23 monies, as necessary and according to proof, to restore any and all monies withheld, acquired
24 and/or converted by Defendants pursuant to Business and Professions Code §§ 17203 and 17208.

25 57. The acts complained of herein occurred within the last four years immediately
26 preceding the filing of the Complaint in this action.

27 58. Plaintiff was compelled to retain the services of counsel to file this court action to
28 protect his interests and those of the Classes, to obtain restitution and injunctive relief on behalf

1 of Defendants' current non-exempt employees, and to enforce important rights affecting the
2 public interest. Plaintiff has thereby incurred the financial burden of attorneys' fees and costs,
3 which he is entitled to recover under Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5.

4 **NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION**
5 **PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT**
6 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

7 59. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

8 60. Defendants have committed several Labor Code violations against Plaintiff,
9 members of the Classes, and other aggrieved employees. Plaintiff, an "aggrieved employee" within
10 the meaning of Labor Code § 2698 *et seq.*, acting on behalf of himself and other aggrieved
11 employees, brings this representative action against Defendants to recover the civil penalties due
12 to Plaintiff, other aggrieved employees, and the State of California according to proof, including,
13 but not limited to: (1) \$100.00 for each initial violation for each failure to pay each employee and
14 \$200.00 for each subsequent violation or willful or intentional violation pursuant to Labor Code §
15 210 for each failure to pay each employee, plus 25% of the amount unlawfully withheld; (2) \$50.00
16 for each initial violation and \$100 for each subsequent violation pursuant to Labor Code § 558 per
17 employee per pay period; (3) \$100.00 for each initial violation and \$250.00 for each subsequent
18 violation pursuant to Labor Code § 1197.1 per employee per pay period; (4) \$250.00 for each
19 initial violation; and \$1,000.00 for each subsequent violation pursuant to Labor Code § 226.3 per
20 employee per pay period; and/or (5) \$100.00 for each initial violation and \$200.00 for each
21 subsequent violation per employee per pay period for those violations of the Labor Code for which
22 no civil penalty is specifically provided, based on the following Labor Code violations:

- 23 a. Failing to pay the statutory minimum wages for all hours worked to Plaintiff and
24 other aggrieved employees in violation of Labor Code §§ 1182.12, 1194, 1194.2,
25 1197, and 1198;
26 b. Failing to pay Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees all earned overtime
27 compensation in violation of Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 558, 1194, and 1198;
28 c. Failing to provide all legally required meal periods, or to pay premium pay in lieu

thereof, to Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees at the regular rate of pay in violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7, 512, 558, and 1198;

d. Failing to authorize and permit all legally required rest periods, or to pay premium pay in lieu thereof, to Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees at the regular rate of pay in violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7, 516, 558, and 1198;

e. Failing to reimburse Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees for all necessary business expenses in violation of Labor Code §§ 2802 and 2804;

f. Failing to furnish Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees with complete, accurate, itemized wage statements in violation of Labor Code § 226 and 1174(d);

g. Failing to timely pay all final wages due to Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees in violation of Labor Code §§ 201, 202, and 203;

h. Failing to pay Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees all earned wages at least twice during each calendar month in violation of Labor Code § 204; and

i. Failing to maintain accurate records on behalf of Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees in violation of Labor Code §§ 1174 and 1198.

61. On or about October 16, 2024, Plaintiff notified Defendant The F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company via certified mail, and the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) via its website, of Defendants’ violations of the California Labor Code and Plaintiff’s intent to bring a claim for civil penalties under California Labor Code § 2698 *et seq.* with respect to violations of the California Labor Code identified in Paragraph 60 (a)-(i). Now that sixty-five days have passed from Plaintiff notifying Defendants of these violations, Plaintiff has exhausted his administrative requirements for bringing a claim under the Private Attorneys General Act with respect to these violations.

62. Based on the foregoing, Plaintiff seeks to represent herself and all Aggrieved Employees, as defined by Labor Code § 2699(c).

63. Plaintiff was compelled to retain the services of counsel to file this court action to protect his interests and the interests of other aggrieved employees, and to assess and collect the civil penalties owed by Defendants. Plaintiff has thereby incurred attorneys’ fees and costs, which

1 he is entitled to receive under California Labor Code § 2699(g).

2 **PRAYER**

3 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment for himself and for all others on whose behalf
4 this suit is brought against Defendants, as follows:

- 5 1. For an order certifying the proposed Classes;
- 6 2. For an order appointing Plaintiff as representative of the Classes;
- 7 3. For an order appointing Counsel for Plaintiff as Counsel for the Classes;
- 8 4. Upon the First Cause of Action, for payment of minimum wages, liquidated
9 damages, and penalties according to proof pursuant to Labor Code §§ 1182.12, 1194, 1194.2,
10 1197, and 1198;
- 11 5. Upon the Second Cause of Action, for compensatory, consequential, general and
12 special damages according to proof pursuant to Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 558, 1194, and 1198;
- 13 6. Upon the Third Cause of Action, for compensatory, consequential, general and
14 special damages according to proof pursuant to Labor Code §§ 226.7, 512, and 558;
- 15 7. Upon the Fourth Cause of Action, for compensatory, consequential, general, and
16 special damages according to proof pursuant to Labor Code §§ 226.7, 516, and 558;
- 17 8. Upon the Fifth Cause of Action, for compensatory, consequential, general, and
18 special damages according to proof pursuant to Labor Code §§ 2802 and 2804;
- 19 9. Upon the Sixth Cause of Action, for statutory penalties pursuant to Labor Code §
20 226 *et seq.*;
- 21 10. Upon the Seventh Cause of Action, for statutory waiting time penalties pursuant
22 to Labor Code §§ 201-203;
- 23 11. Upon the Eighth Cause of Action, for restitution to Plaintiff and members of the
24 Classes of all money and/or property unlawfully acquired by Defendants by means of any acts or
25 practices declared by this Court to be in violation of Business and Professions Code § 17200 *et*
26 *seq.*;
- 27 12. Upon the Ninth Cause of Action, for civil penalties due to Plaintiff, other
28 aggrieved employees, and the State of California according to proof pursuant to Labor Code §§

558 and 2699(a) and (f) including, but not limited to: (1) \$100.00 for each initial violation for each failure to pay each employee and \$200 for each subsequent violation or willful or intentional violation pursuant to Labor Code § 210 for each failure to pay each employee, plus 25% of the amount unlawfully withheld; (2) \$50.00 for each initial violation and \$100 for each subsequent violation pursuant to Labor Code § 558 per employee per pay period; (3) \$100.00 for each initial violation and \$250.00 for each subsequent violation pursuant to Labor Code § 1197.1 per employee per pay period; (4) \$250.00 for each initial violation and \$1,000.00 for each subsequent violation pursuant to Labor Code § 226.3 per employee per pay period; and/or (5) \$100.00 for each initial violation and \$200 for each subsequent violation per employee per pay period for those violations of the Labor Code for which no civil penalty is specifically provided, based on the Labor Code violations identified in Paragraph 60 (a)-(i);

13. Prejudgment interest on all due and unpaid wages pursuant to California Labor Code § 218.6 and Civil Code §§ 3287 and 3289;

14. On all causes of action, for attorneys' fees and costs as provided by Labor Code §§ 226, 1194, 2802(c), and Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5; and

15. For such other and further relief, the Court may deem just and proper.

Dated: February 4, 2026

Respectfully submitted,
HAINES LAW GROUP, APC

By:


Paul K. Haines
Attorneys for Plaintiff

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff hereby demands a jury trial with respect to all issues triable by jury.

Dated: February 4, 2026

Respectfully submitted,
HAINES LAW GROUP, APC

By:


Paul K. Haines
Attorneys for Plaintiff

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On April 20, 2026, I served the foregoing document(s) described as:

on the interested party(ies) in this action as follows:

[X] (VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL) Pursuant to California Rule of Court 2.251(c)(3), I sent the document(s) to the person(s) at the electronic service address(es) listed from the email address aclark@haineslawgroup.com.

Executed on April 20, 2026, at El Segundo, California.

Aaron Clark