
November 8, 2024

Via Online Filing to LWDA and Certified Mail to Defendant
Labor and Workforce Development Agency
Online Filing

SIERRA MINIT MARTS, INC.

c/o LightGabler LLP

Jamie N. Stein, Esq.

Chancellor D. Nobles, Esq.

Adriana Zeider

760 Paseo Camarillo, Suite 300

Camarillo, CA 93010

jstein@lightgablerlaw.com

cnobles@lightgablerlaw.com

azeider@lightgablerlaw.com

Via Electronic Transmission

Re: Notice of Violations of California Labor Code Sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 218.6, 221, 226, 226.2, 226.3, 226.7, 227.3, 246, 510, 512, 558, 1174(d), 1174.5, 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1197.14, 1198, 1198.5, 1199, 2802, 2804, and Violation of Applicable Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Order(s), and Pursuant to California Labor Code Section 2699.5

Dear Sir/Madam:

This notice is being sent in compliance with Cal. Lab. Code § 2699.3. Our offices represent Plaintiff TATYANA WILSON ("Plaintiff") and other aggrieved employees. Plaintiff was employed by Defendant SIERRA MINIT MARTS, INC. ("Defendant") in California from February 2022 to May 2022, as a non-exempt employee, paid on an hourly basis, and entitled to payment of all wages and the legally required meal and rest breaks.

Plaintiff alleges that within the past year, she personally suffered violations of the following Labor Codes Sections as a result of Defendant's failure to pay Plaintiff for all time worked, provide Plaintiff with compliant meal periods, provide Plaintiff with compliant rest periods, provide Plaintiff with accurate itemized wage statements that facially comply with the requirements provided for in Labor Code Section 226, furnish wages to Plaintiff with the frequency as set forth under Labor Code Section 204, and reimburse Plaintiff for necessary business expenses: Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 218.6, 221, 226, 226.2, 226.3, 226.7, 227.3, 246, 510, 512, 558, 1174(d), 1174.5, 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1197.14, 1198, 1198.5, 1199, 2802, and 2804. These violations are actionable under California Labor Code section 2699.3.

The information below provides notice to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency of the facts and theories supporting the alleged violations for the agency's reference. If the agency needs

any further information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Plaintiff seeks to represent a group of aggrieved employees defined as any person currently or formerly employed by Defendant who performed work in California and against whom one or more of the alleged violations listed above were committed (“Aggrieved Employees”) during the relevant claim period. Plaintiff believes this group to be comprised of all current and former non-exempt employees who performed work for Defendant in California during the period beginning one year prior to the date of this Notice and continuing through the present.

In violation of the applicable sections of the California Labor Code and the requirements of the Industrial Welfare Commission (“IWC”) Wage Order, Defendant as a matter of company policy, practice, and procedure, intentionally, knowingly, and systematically failed to provide legally compliant meal and rest periods, failed to accurately compensate Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for missed meal and rest periods, failed to pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for all time worked, failed compensate Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for off-the-clock work, failed to pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees overtime at the correct regular rate of pay, failed to compensate Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees meal and rest premiums at the regular rate of pay, failed to pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees redeemed sick pay at the regular rate of pay, failed to reimburse Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for business expenses, and failed to issue to Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees accurate itemized wage statements showing, among other things, all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay periods and the corresponding amount of time worked at each hourly rate. Defendant’s uniform policies and practices are intended to purposefully avoid the accurate and full payment of all time worked as required by California law, which allows Defendant to illegally profit and gain an unfair advantage over competitors who comply with the law.

Meal Period Violations: Pursuant to the Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders, Defendant was required to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for all their time worked, meaning the time during which an employee is subject to the control of an employer, including all the time the employee is suffered or permitted to work. From time to time during the last year, Defendant required Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees to work without paying them for all the time they were under Defendant’s control. Specifically, Defendant required Plaintiff to work while clocked out during what was supposed to be Plaintiff’s off-duty meal break. Indeed, there were many days when Plaintiff did not even receive a partial lunch. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees forfeited minimum wage and overtime compensation by regularly working without their time being accurately recorded and without compensation at the applicable minimum wage and overtime rates. Defendant’s uniform policy and practice not to pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for all time worked is evidenced by Defendant’s business records.

During the last year, as a result of their rigorous work schedules and Defendant’s inadequate staffing practices, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were from time to time unable to take thirty (30) minute off duty meal breaks and were not fully relieved of duty for their meal periods. Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were required to perform work as ordered by Defendant for more than five (5) hours during some shifts without receiving a meal break. Further, Defendant failed to provide Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with a second off-duty meal period for some workdays in which these employees were required by Defendant to work ten (10) hours of work. The nature of the work performed by Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees does not

qualify for the limited and narrowly construed “on-duty” meal period exception. When they were provided with meal periods, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were, from time to time, required to remain on duty and on call. Defendant’s failure to provide Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with legally required meal breaks is evidenced by Defendant’s business records. As a result of their rigorous work schedules and Defendant’s inadequate staffing, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees therefore forfeited meal breaks without additional compensation and in accordance with Defendant’s strict corporate policy and practice.

Rest Period Violations: From time to time during the past year, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were also required to work in excess of four (4) hours without being provided ten (10) minute rest periods as a result of their rigorous work requirements and Defendant’s inadequate staffing. Further, for the same reasons, these employees were denied their first rest periods of at least ten (10) minutes for some shifts worked of at least two (2) to four (4) hours from time to time, a first and second rest period of at least ten (10) minutes for some shifts worked of between six (6) and eight (8) hours from time to time, and a first, second and third rest period of at least ten (10) minutes for some shifts worked of ten (10) hours or more from time to time. When they were provided with rest breaks, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were, from time to time, required to remain on premises, on duty and/or on call, and not fully relieved of all duties. Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were also not provided with one-hour wages in lieu thereof. As a result of their rigorous work schedules and Defendant’s inadequate staffing, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were from time to time denied their proper rest periods by Defendant and Defendant’s managers.

Unreimbursed Business Expenses: Defendant as a matter of corporate policy, practice, and procedure, intentionally, knowingly, and systematically failed to reimburse and indemnify the Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for required business expenses incurred by the Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees in direct consequence of discharging their duties on behalf of Defendant. Under California Labor Code Section 2802, employers are required to indemnify employees for all expenses incurred in the course and scope of their employment. Cal. Lab. Code § 2802 expressly states that “an employer shall indemnify his or her employee 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, even though unlawful, unless the employee, at the time of obeying the directions, believed them to be unlawful.”

Within the last year, in the course of their employment, Defendant required Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees to incur personal expenses for the use of their personal cell phones, costs to purchase work pants and non-slip shoes, and expenses incurred for washing and maintaining their work t-shirt/apron as a result of and in furtherance of their job duties. Specifically, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were required to incur personal expenses for the use of their personal cell phones, costs to purchase work pants and non-slip shoes, and expenses incurred for washing and maintaining their work t-shirt/apron. However, Defendant unlawfully failed to reimburse Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for the use of their personal cell phones, costs to purchase work pants and non-slip shoes, and expenses incurred for washing and maintaining their work t-shirt/apron. As a result, in the course of their employment with Defendant, the Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees incurred unreimbursed business expenses that included, but were not limited to, costs related to the personal expenses incurred for the use of their personal cell phones, costs to purchase work pants and non-slip shoes, and expenses incurred for washing and maintaining their work t-shirt/apron, all on behalf of and for the benefit of Defendant.

Wage Statement Violations: California Labor Code Section 226 requires an employer to furnish its employees and accurate itemized wage statement in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece-rate, (4) all deductions, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and only the last four digits of the employee's social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee. From time to time during the last year, when Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees missed meal and rest breaks, or were paid inaccurately for missed meal and rest period premiums, or were not paid for all hours worked, Defendant also failed to provide Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with complete and accurate wage statements which failed to show, among other things, all deductions, the total hours worked and all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period, and the corresponding amount of time worked at each hourly rate, correct rates of pay for penalty payments or missed meal and rest periods. Defendant also failed to provide Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with complete and accurate wage statements that included all required elements listed above. As a result, Defendant issued to Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with wage statements that violate Cal. Lab. Code § 226. Further, Defendant's violations are knowing and intentional, were not isolated due to an unintentional payroll error or due to clerical or inadvertent mistake.

Off-the-Clock Work Resulting in Minimum Wage and Overtime Violations: During the last year, from time-to-time, Defendant failed and continues to fail to accurately pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for all hours worked. During the last year, from time-to-time Defendant required Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees to perform pre-shift or post-shift work, such as cleaning and finalizing tasks. This resulted in Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees having to work while off-the-clock. Defendant directly benefited from the undercompensated off-the-clock work performed by Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees. Defendant controlled the work schedules, duties, and protocols, applications, assignments, and employment conditions of Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees.

Defendants were able to track the amount of time Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees spent working; however, Defendant failed to document, track, or pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees all wages earned and owed for all the work they performed. Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were non-exempt employees, subject to the requirements of the California Labor Code. Defendant's policies and practices deprived Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees of all minimum regular, overtime, and double time wages owed for the off-the-clock work activities. Because Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees typically worked over forty (40) hours in a workweek, and more than eight (8) hours per day, Defendant's policies and practices also deprived them of overtime pay.

Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees' off-the-clock work was compensable under the law. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees forfeited wages due to them for all hours worked at Defendant's direction, control, and benefit for the time spent working while off-the-clock, including but not limited to, undergoing pre-shift and post-shift work such as cleaning and finalizing tasks. Defendant's uniform policy and practice to not pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees wages for all hours worked in accordance with

applicable law is evidenced by Defendant's business records.

Regular Rate Violation – Overtime, Double Time, Meal and Rest Period Premiums, and Redeemed Sick Pay: From time to time during the last year, Defendant failed and continues to fail to accurately calculate and pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for their overtime and double time hours worked, meal and rest period premiums, and redeemed sick pay. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees forfeited wages due to them for working overtime without compensation at the correct overtime and double time rates, meal and rest period premiums, and redeemed sick pay rates. Defendant's uniform policy and practice not to pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees at the correct rate for all overtime and double time worked, meal and rest period premiums, and sick pay in accordance with applicable law is evidenced by Defendant's business records.

State law provides that employees must be paid overtime at one-and-one-half times their "regular rate of pay." Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were compensated at an hourly rate plus incentive pay that was tied to specific elements of an employee's performance. The second component of Plaintiff's and other Aggrieved Employees' compensation was Defendant's non-discretionary incentive program that paid Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees incentive wages based on their performance for Defendant. The non-discretionary bonus program provided all employees paid on an hourly basis with bonus compensation when the employees met the various performance goals set by Defendant. However, from time to time, when calculating the regular rate of pay in those pay periods where Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees worked overtime, double time, paid meal and rest period premium payments, and/or redeemed sick pay, and earned non-discretionary bonuses, Defendant failed to accurately include the non-discretionary bonus compensation as part of the employee's "regular rate of pay" and/or calculated all hours worked rather than just all non-overtime hours worked. Management and supervisors described the incentive/bonus program to potential and new employees as part of the compensation package. As a matter of law, the incentive compensation received by Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees must be included in the "regular rate of pay." The failure to do so has resulted in a systematic underpayment of overtime and double time compensation, meal and rest period premium payments, and redeemed sick pay to Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees by Defendant.

Specifically, California Labor Code Section 246 mandates that paid sick time for non-exempt employees shall be calculated in the same manner as the regular rate of pay for the workweek in which the non-exempt employee uses paid sick time, whether or not the employee actually works overtime in that workweek. Defendant's conduct, as articulated herein, by failing to include the incentive compensation as part of the "regular rate of pay" for purposes of sick pay compensation was in violation of Cal. Lab. Code § 246 the underpayment of which is recoverable under Cal. Lab. Code Sections 201, 202, 203, and/or 204.

In violation of the applicable sections of the California Labor Code and the requirements of the Industrial Welfare Commission ("IWC") Wage Order, Defendant as a matter of company policy, practice, and procedure, intentionally and knowingly failed to compensate Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees at the correct rate of pay for all overtime and double time worked, meal and rest period premiums, and redeemed sick pay as required by California law which allowed Defendant to illegally profit and gain an unfair advantage over competitors who complied with the law.

Unlawful Deductions: During the last year, Defendant, from time-to-time, unlawfully deducted wages from Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees' pay without explanations and without authorization to do so or notice to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees. As a result, Defendant violated Labor Code § 221.

Timekeeping Manipulation: During the last year, Defendant, from time-to-time, did not have an immutable timekeeping system to accurately record and pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for the actual time Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees worked each day, including regular time, overtime hours, sick pay, meal and rest breaks. As a result, Defendant was able to and did in fact, unlawfully, and unilaterally alter the time recorded in Defendant's timekeeping system for Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees in order to avoid paying these employees for all hours worked, applicable overtime compensation, applicable sick pay, missed meal breaks and missed rest breaks. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees, from time-to-time, forfeited time worked by working without their time being accurately recorded and without compensation at the applicable pay rates.

The mutability of the timekeeping system also allowed Defendant to alter employee time records by recording fictitious thirty (30) minute meal breaks in Defendant's timekeeping system so as to create the appearance that Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees clocked out for thirty (30) minute meal breaks when in fact the employees were not at all times provided an off-duty meal break. This practice is a direct result of Defendant's uniform policy and practice of denying employees uninterrupted thirty (30) minute off-duty meal breaks each day or otherwise compensate them for missed meal breaks. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees forfeited wages due to them for all hours worked at Defendant's direction, control and benefit for the time the timekeeping system was inoperable. Defendant's uniform policy and practice to not pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees wages for all hours worked in accordance with applicable law is evidenced by Defendant's business records.

Unlawful Rounding Practices: During the last year, Defendant did not have in place an immutable timekeeping system to accurately record and pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for the actual time these employees worked each day, including overtime hours. Specifically, Defendant had in place an unlawful rounding policy and practice that resulted in Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees being undercompensated for all of their time worked. As a result, Defendant was able to and did in fact unlawfully, and unilaterally round the time recorded in Defendant's timekeeping system for Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees in order to avoid paying these employees for all their time worked, including the applicable overtime compensation for overtime worked. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees, from time to time, forfeited compensation for their time worked by working without their time being accurately recorded and without compensation at the applicable overtime rates.

Further, the mutability of Defendant's timekeeping system and unlawful rounding policy and practice resulted in Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees' time being inaccurately recorded. As a result, from time to time, Defendant's unlawful rounding policy and practice caused Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees to perform work as ordered by Defendant for more than five (5) hours during a shift without receiving an off-duty meal break.

Untimely Payment of Wages: Pursuant to California Labor Code section 204, Plaintiff and the

Aggrieved Employees were entitled to timely payment of wages during their employment. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees, from time to time, did not receive payment of all wages, including, but not limited to, overtime wages, minimum wages, meal period premium wages, and rest period premium wages within permissible time period. Pursuant to Cal. Lab. Code § 201, “If an employer discharges an employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately.” Pursuant to Cal. Lab. Code § 202, if an employee quits his or her employment, “his or her wages shall become due and payable not later than 72 hours thereafter, unless the employee has given 72 hours previous notice of his or her intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled to his or her wages at the time of quitting.” Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were, from time to time, not timely provided the wages earned and unpaid at the time of their discharge and/or at the time of quitting, in violation of Cal. Lab. Code §§ 201 and 202. To date, Defendant has not fully paid PLAINTIFF the minimum, overtime and double time compensation still owed to her or any penalty wages owed to her under Cal. Lab. Code § 203.

Sick Pay Violations: Cal. Labor Code Section 246 (a)(1) mandates that “An employee who, on or after July 1, 2015, works in California for the same employer for 30 or more days within a year from the commencement of employment is entitled to paid sick days as specified in this section.” Further, Cal. Labor Code Sections 246(b)-(d) provide for the sick day accrual requirements. From time to time, including within the last year, Defendant failed to have a policy or practice in place that provided Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with sick days and/or paid sick leave. As of January 1, 2024, Defendant failed to adhere to the law in that they failed to provide and allow employees to use at least 40 hours or five days of paid sick leave per year. California Labor Code Section 246(i) requires an employer to furnish its employees with written wage statements setting forth the amount of paid sick leave available. From time to time, including within the last year, Defendant violated Cal. Lab. Code § 246 by failing to furnish Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with wage statements setting forth the amount of paid sick leave available.

To the extent that entities and/or individuals are named and charged with violations of the Labor Code—making them liable on an individual basis as permitted by numerous Labor Code Sections including, but not limited to 558, 558.1, and 1197.1—Plaintiff reserves any and all rights to add, substitute, or change the name of employer entities and/or individuals responsible for the violations at issue.

Any further amendments and changes to this notice shall relate back to the date of this notice. Consequently, Defendant is on notice that Plaintiff continues her investigation, with the full intent to amend and/or change this notice, to add any undiscovered violations of any of the provisions of the California Labor Code—to the extent that are applicable to this case—and to change and/or add the identities of any entities and/or individuals responsible for the violations contained herein.

This notice is provided in compliance with California Labor Code section 2695, *et seq.*

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above number and address.

Very truly yours,

JCL LAW FIRM, APC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized representation of the initials 'JCL' followed by a surname, likely representing the JCL LAW FIRM, APC.

Jean-Claude Lapuyade, Esq.