



# Shore-area gas stations pay back wages, overtime

**Michael L. Diamond**, May 4, 2018

Three Shore-area gas stations have agreed to pay back wages to attendants who didn't receive at least minimum wage and overtime they were due, the U.S. Labor Department said.

The owner of Gasco stations in Eagleswood and Barnegat and the owner of Valero in Fair Haven were among 24 central and southern New Jersey stations that paid \$2.1 million in back wages to 87 attendants, the Labor Department said.

The penalty resolves violations found during an investigation by the department's Wage and Hour Division. It spotlighted a lingering issue that has become isolated to the Garden State. New Jersey is the only state in the nation that still prohibits motorists from pumping their own gas — a distinction that has turned into a perennial debate. See the video above about how that played out in Oregon.

Operators in recent years have been forced to pay closer attention to how they pay attendants to ensure they abide by the rules: Federal law requires attendants to be paid at least \$7.25 an hour and overtime when they work more than 40 hours a week. (New Jersey's minimum wage is \$8.60 an hour.)

Station owners haven't always stuck to the letter of the law, said Sal Risalvato, executive director of the New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store and Automotive Association, a trade group.

The biggest mistake? They sometimes would pay workers a lump sum at the end of the week, alleviating bookkeeping headaches, but also improperly making them salaried instead of hourly, he said.

The association in 2011 began working more closely with regulators to educate its members, Risalvato said. It has offered seminars and included a question-and-answer feature focused on labor issues in its quarterly newsletter.

In this case, "I'm glad DOL found it, and I'm glad DOL is punishing them," he said. "Their business practice is cheating their competition that are in the area around them."

The breakdown:

- Gasco in Eagleswood paid \$6,556 in back wages, and an equal amount in damages for failing to properly pay one employee.
- Gasco in Barnegat paid \$6,311.25 in back wages, and an equal amount in damages for failing to properly pay four employees.
- And Valero in Fair Haven paid \$2,673 in back wages for failing to properly pay one employee. No damages or penalties were assessed.

Other gas stations where violations were found, according to the Labor Department:

Citgo, Moorestown  
Citgo, Maple Shade  
Citgo, Burlington  
Citgo, Cherry Hill  
Citgo, Pennington  
Citgo, Pitman  
Gasco Yardville, Trenton  
Gasco Greenwood, Trenton  
Gasco Tri Star, Trenton  
Gasco Chambers, Trenton  
Gasco, Lambertville  
Gasco Vincentown  
Gasco, Morrisville, Pa.  
Luikoil, Merchantville  
USA Gas, Pemberton  
USA Gas, Maple Shade  
USA Gas, Vineland  
USA Gas, Newfield  
USA Gas, Elmer  
USA Gas, Mount Holly  
Valero, Bellmawr  
Xtra Power Gas, Voorhees.