

**Wisconsin Restaurants Fined for  
Pocketing \$272k in Back Wages,  
Child Labor Violations**

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The U.S. Department of Labor conducted an investigation and found that Casa Tequila LLC, the operator of four restaurants in Wisconsin, violated federal regulations related to wages and child labor laws. The violations affected 110 employees, including servers, cooks, and others, who were denied earned wages and tips. The investigation revealed that Casa Tequila operated an invalid tip pool at its Pewaukee restaurant by including kitchen staff and cooks, which led to a loss of credit for tips towards minimum wage and overtime obligations for tipped employees. The employer also miscalculated overtime wages for some employees by basing the overtime rate on their cash wage rather than the minimum wage.

Additionally, the investigation found that Casa Tequila employed three minors aged 14 to 15, allowing them to work beyond the legal hours and violating federal child labor standards. The Fair Labor Standards Act's minimum wage, recordkeeping, and child labor provisions were all violated by the restaurant operator. As a result of these violations, Casa Tequila was required to pay a total of \$272,177 in back wages to the affected employees and faced civil money penalties of \$2,373 for the child labor violations. The Department of Labor emphasized the importance of complying with wage and labor laws and holding employers accountable for their actions.

The meager fine assessed by the Department of Labor shows the extent to which the capitalist institutions hold employers as “accountable”. The exploitation of workers under capitalism occurs constantly, and it is only when employers are found to have broken labor laws so egregiously that they face any kind of consequence. The consequences, unsurprisingly, are very small and are no real deterrent to such activity, as evidenced by the fact that violations of child labor laws which have been uncovered have risen nearly 300% over a seven-year period.

Sources: 1 2