# Court: Tyson Workers Must Be Paid For Donning Gear

The Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Workers at a Wisconsin meat processing plant must be paid for time spent putting on and taking off protective clothing, an appeals court ruled Thursday.

The ruling came in a lawsuit filed by six workers at the Tyson Prepared Foods Inc., plant in Jefferson, Wis. It is one of several filed nationwide by meat and poultry workers, who say they spend significant time putting on and taking off gear that can include hair nets, hard hats, shoe covers, safety glasses and frocks, which are like coats with snaps in front.

The Jefferson County Circuit Court had said Tyson did not have to pay workers for that time because putting on and taking off the gear wasn't essential to their duties. The 4th District Court of Appeals disagreed, saying it counted as "preparatory and concluding" activities that were an integral part of their jobs.

It did not rule on another claim that time spent walking to and from work stations after and before dressing should be paid.

Tyson spokesman Worth Sparkman said in an email that the company was disappointed in the decision and evaluating its options for further defense of the case.

Doug Phebus, the attorney representing the six workers, did not immediately return a message requesting comment.

Tyson's plant in Jefferson primarily produces pepperoni for pizza toppings.

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