



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

General Order Number: 11-02	Effective Date: January 2010
Division: Personnel Management	
Chapter: Alternate Work Schedule (AWS) for H-Scale Employees	
By Order of the Fire Chief: Marc S. Bashoor	Revision Date: N/A

POLICY

This General Order shall define the Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) for all H-Scale Employees to ensure responsibilities of each individual employee and his/her supervisor regarding the AWS.

DEFINITIONS

Alternative Work Schedules (AWS) - Variations of traditional work schedules where employees can modify arrival and departure times within the parameters agreed upon between supervisor and employee.

Flexible Bands (flex bands) - the specific periods of the workday during which employees may determine their own schedules or work time, provided they meet the agreed requirements for total hours on the job.

Core Time or Core Working Hours - Core time is the required time during the workday when all employees should be present for work.

Compressed Work Schedule - A compressed schedule enables an employee to fulfill the regular or traditional work schedule of eighty (80) hours in a bi-weekly pay period over a span of less than ten (10) workdays with a fixed starting and departure time.

Flex Hours - Non-work hours during the regular workweek for employees participating in one of the compressed work schedules.

PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES

1. General Provisions

All participating employees and supervisors are expected to comply fully with the Alternate Work Schedule for H-Scale Employees Program requirements. Personnel Law will prevail concerning conflicts or uncertainty between any provision(s) of the Program and Personnel Law.

Program Overview

An Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) Program, or what is more commonly referred to as a "flex-time" work plan, is offered by the Prince George's Fire/EMS Department to all H-Scale employees. Job responsibilities of each individual will be evaluated by the responsible supervisor, who will determine whether an H-Scale employee (or employee groups) can participate in the AWS Program.



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All full-time, permanent, H-Scale employees of the Fire/EMS Department are to be given an opportunity to participate in the AWS Program unless participation by an individual employee or group of employees will "substantially impair" the ability of the organizational unit to get the job done. This determination rests with the respective career/civilian manager and/or supervisor.

NOTE: For the purpose of this General Order, employee(s) refers to H-Scale employee(s).

Supervisors and participating employees shall comply fully with the program requirements. Personnel Law will prevail concerning conflicts or uncertainty between any provisions of this program and Personnel Law.

Utilizing the AWS Program

AWS hours of work shall begin at 6:00 a.m. and end at 6:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday (See Attachment 4). Approved AWS schedules will be limited to a maximum of ten (10) hours of work daily. The morning flex band is from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. The evening flex band is from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Core working hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (excluding lunch).

The core time requirement does not apply to individuals on approved absence or away from the job site conducting County business. The primary purpose of core hours is to establish times when normal channels of communication between individuals are open for the exchange of information. To preserve the purpose of core time, absences during core time are permissible only in cases of urgent personal need. However, such absences can be made up during the flexible bands on the same day period with the prior permission of the supervisor.

NOTE: Make-up work periods cannot create an overtime situation for FLSA employees.

2. Program Descriptions

Regular (Traditional) Work Schedule

Persons electing not to participate in the AWS Program (and those who terminate AWS schedules) will follow the current, regular work schedule, consisting of eight (8) productive work hours each workday over a two-week pay period with fixed starting and departure times, which currently are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

"Flexitour" Work Schedule

Employee can select "fixed" arrival and departure times that differ from the regular work schedule. Each workday will generally consist of eight (8) productive work hours daily over a two-week pay period.



"Flexiday" Work Schedule

Employees can vary their arrival and departure time within the flex band periods. The employee must notify the supervisor of an estimated arrival time on a daily basis.

Core hours must be adhered to except under special/unusual circumstances when core hours may be modified by the supervisor with the approval of the career/civilian manager.

Compressed Work Schedule (4 Ten-hour Days)

Employees work ten (10) productive work hours for four (4) days each workweek. Starting and departure times and the day off are fixed.

Compressed Work Schedule (4 1/2 Nine-hour Days)

Employees work nine (9) productive work hours per day for four (4) days and four (4) productive work hours for one (1) day each workweek. Starting and departure times and the partial day off are fixed.

Compressed Work Schedule (5 -4/9)

Each day period, employees work nine (9) productive work hours daily for eight (days) and eight (8) productive work hours for one (1) day. Participation in this plan is limited to FLSA "exempt" employees. Starting and departure times and the day off are fixed.

3. Applications for Alternative Work Schedules (AWS)

Eligibility

All full-time, permanent H-Scale employees of the Fire/EMS Department are to be given an opportunity to elect to participate in the AWS Program, unless participation by an individual employee or group of employees will "substantially impair" the ability of the organizational unit to get the job done. This determination rests with the respective career/civilian manager and/or supervisor.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Considerations

The Fire/EMS Department employs both FLSA "covered" (nonexempt) and FLSA "exempt" employees (Note: FLSA "exempt" employees are not subject to FLSA requirements). An employee can determine coverage by Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) Program referring to the designation noted at the upper right corner of the individual's timesheet. Generally, persons at Grade 17 or below are "covered" by FLSA.



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FLSA establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, record keeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in Federal, State, and local governments. Of particular importance are the implications of FLSA requirements relative to overtime pay.

FLSA "covered" (non exempt) employees are entitled to overtime pay at a rate of not less than one and one-half times their regular rates of pay after 40 hours of work in a work week. No AWS request for FLSA "covered" non exempt employees will be approved that exceeds forty (40) hours in a workweek.

Application to or Withdrawal from the AWS Program

Individual employees desiring either to start or change an AWS will submit an application (Attachment 1) to their supervisor at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the effective date. Entry to or a change in the AWS Program will only be permitted at the beginning of a quarterly cycle - July 1, October 1, January 1, and April 1. A written request to withdraw from AWS will be permitted at any time. (Modifications to current supervisor and employee relationships associated with transfers, promotions, etc. will require review of existing AWS schedules due to the change of circumstance).

The defined work schedules discussed in this procedure do not preclude the construction of other alternative work schedules requested by the employee and approved by the first-line supervisor and career/civilian manager for compelling personal reasons, e.g., transportation arrangements, day care arrangements, education or training schedules, health reasons, etc.

Consideration of Employee's AWS Application

The first-line supervisor will provide a written response to the employee of the decision regarding AWS at least two (2) weeks prior to the start of the requested change. These criteria will be observed by the first-line supervisor and career/civilian manager in approving the AWS requests:

- Whether the office will be able to continue to meet its workload requirements -thus the amount and quality of work produced should not be reduced by granting the AWS request,
- Supervisory availability and a mix of more experienced employees with less experienced ones,
- The need to coordinate functions among employees, supervisors, and other sections, especially the need for office coverage during the normal business day, and,
- Services to other offices within the Fire/EMS Department, other County agencies, and the general public, i.e., services will not be impaired by approving requested AWS schedules.

The first-line supervisor or career/civilian manager may decide to:

- Approve AWS application without modification,
- Approve AWS application with modification, or
- Deny the AWS application.



If the application is modified or denied, the first-line supervisor and/or career/civilian manager will document the reason(s) and discuss it with the employee. It is anticipated that the employee, first-line supervisor, and career/civilian manager can reach mutual agreement about an AWS request. If the employee is not satisfied with the AWS decision, that individual may appeal the decision to the AWS Committee for further consideration.

Final approval of an AWS must be provided by the Department's Electronic Timesheet System (ETS) Coordinator, who must adjust the ETS to accommodate the new schedule, prior to an employee beginning an AWS.

Conflicting Requests

Should two (2) or more employees request the same alternative work schedule and the first-line supervisor cannot accommodate all the requests, the employees will be asked to resolve the scheduling problem between themselves. If the employees cannot resolve the matter, then the selection of schedules will be made based on seniority. The situation will be revisited on an annual basis (July 1) to determine the viability of a reasonable substitute plan.

4. Breaks during the Workday

Lunch Break

Employees who work more than five (5) hours in a workday shall receive an unpaid thirty-(30) minute meal period. **The employee may be allowed, with the supervisor's advance approval, to expand the one-half hour lunch break.** The expanded period of absence can be made up before the end of the pay period but cannot create an overtime (or other compensatory) situation for a FLSA "covered" (nonexempt) employee. Lunch breaks must be taken between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (inclusive).

Rest Period

Employees are allowed up to an additional thirty (30) minute period daily to accommodate personal requirements. **This time is limited to workdays of at least eight (8) productive hours and cannot be used to arrive late or leave early.** Break periods are not cumulative from day to day. These special requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Cafeteria or snack breaks
- Smoke breaks
- Bank or credit union business
- Extended lunch break
- Rest period
- Other non-work related activity



NOTE: Breaks as defined by Personnel Law, Administrative Procedures, Contracts, and/or FLSA are included in this time frame.

5. Hours Worked in Excess of Regular Workday

Overtime

Overtime shall be held to an absolute minimum and must be approved in advance by the supervisor, the career/civilian manager, and/or the Fire Chief on a form document similar to that provided in Attachment 2.

Overtime requests are to be submitted to the proper authority for approval as soon as practical prior to the need. Overtime will be distributed equally and fairly among all qualified employees. The rate of pay will be consistent with that provided by Personnel Law and by Salary Schedule H, Schedule of Pay Grades General Schedules, and as provided for by the FLSA.

Employees may be required to work mandatory overtime due to an emergency operating condition as declared by the Fire Chief or a designee. An emergency condition is one in which the work cannot be postponed until the next workday. Supervisor approved absences from mandatory overtime are permissible only in cases of urgent personal need.

Compensatory Time

Employees entitled to earn overtime compensation may elect to earn compensatory leave in lieu of overtime compensation. Compensatory time must be approved in advance by the career/civilian manager or designee on a form document similar to that provided in Attachment 2. Accrual and use of compensatory leave shall also be subject to the restriction cited in Salary Schedule H, Schedule of Pay Grades -General Schedule.

6. Leave Considerations

General

Implementation of this AWS Program will in no way change current leave practices except as otherwise provided for by this procedure. Leave requests will still be granted or denied in accordance with the needs of the office, workload requirements, the nature of the leave request, e.g., annual, sick, leave-without-pay (LWOP), and applicable County instructions. The amount of leave to be charged will be equal to the difference between the number of hours the employee was scheduled to work on that day and the number of productive hours worked (if any). (Example - scheduled 10 hours, must record 10 hours of appropriate leave.)

Requests for leave must normally be approved in advance of use. Leave requests of less than five (5) days should be made as soon as the employee is aware of the time of expected use. Leave requests of five days or more should be submitted at least 14 calendar days in advance of the anticipated leave period. Supervisors are required to make a timely response to leave requests.



If an employee is unable, or will be tardy reporting, to work due to an emergency, illness, or other reason, every effort should be made to notify their supervisor by their normal reporting time or not later than 9:00 a.m. The employee should speak directly to the immediate supervisor (or his/her superior) so that pending work or other matters, which may affect the conduct of business can be discussed.

In-Lieu Holidays

If a holiday falls on a compressed schedule employee's non-workday, the next scheduled workday is the "in-lieu holiday," unless an alternative "in-lieu holiday" has been approved in advance by the supervisor. The alternate "in-lieu holiday" should occur within the same pay period when feasible.

Example: Monday is a holiday and is also the employee's scheduled non-workday; the employee would take Tuesday as the in-lieu holiday and report to work on Wednesday.

Administrative Leave -Work Site Closings

Administrative leave due to inclement weather or other emergency closings of the work site will be reported as follows for any individual deemed nonessential:

- When the County Executive authorizes administrative leave prior to an employee's reporting time, nonessential employees are not required to report to their established work sites. These employees must charge appropriate, scheduled work hours to earnings code number 33 on their timesheets.
- When the County Executive authorizes administrative leave after an employee's established reporting time, nonessential employees who report to their regular work station within one (1) hour of the established reporting time will receive regular timesheet credit for all hours worked and administrative leave is to be charged to earnings code 33 for any non-work hours remaining in the scheduled workday after the release time.
- Delayed Openings -Unless a specific number of hours of administrative leave is granted by the County Executive, employees will be allowed to report administrative leave on their timesheets for the number of hours from the beginning of their approved, scheduled workday until the County opens for business. NOTE: Employees working on a flexible band AWS will consider the average reporting time during the previous full pay period as the basis for the normal reporting time.
- Early Closings -All employees will record on their timesheets the actual hours worked under the appropriate code and will charge earnings code 33 for any non-work hours remaining in the scheduled workday after the designated closing time.
 - NOTE 1: Employees are reminded to call the County's "Status of County Government Telephone Line" before attempting to come to work when the normal hours of business operation are questionable. The number is 301-952-4810.
 - NOTE 2: Administrative leave, which may be authorized for employees scheduled to work does not apply to the following individuals: Nonessential employees who previously requested and were granted other leave, e.g., annual, sick, personal,



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compensatory, are to be charged for the entire day or part of the day for which approved leave was granted. AWS employees who are absent from work based on approved flex hours.

Training or Travel Status

The employee's work schedule will temporarily conform to the requirements of the activity. The employee should consult in advance with the supervisor for specific direction.

Tardiness

Tardiness of more than 15 minutes is to be charged in even increments of one-half hour of annual leave. The supervisor has discretion to allow make-up of tardiness during the payroll reporting period. Repetitive tardiness may result in disciplinary action as determined by the supervisor, which may include restriction or revocation of the employee's AWS Program participation.

7. Time Reporting

Daily Log

All AWS employees will sign in at the beginning of their workday utilizing the ETS. If the employee forgets to punch in, his or her supervisor must follow the ETS procedure for missed punches.

Timesheets

Employees and supervisors are responsible for approving electronic timesheets before noon of the County workday immediately following each payday (unless otherwise instructed). Employees and supervisors are to ensure that the information is accurate.

Hours of work will be earned and reported on the timesheets as outlined in timesheet policies and procedures. All annual and sick leave taken must be requested and reported in one-half hour (or thirty-minute) increments, consistent with Personnel Law.

8. General Principles

Scheduling Meetings

To the extent practical, meetings should be scheduled during core work hours (between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.), with as much advance notice to employees as possible.

Basic Work Requirement

The basic work requirement is the number of hours (excluding overtime or compensatory time earned) that employees are required to work or otherwise account for approved leave, leave without pay, compensatory time used, excused absences, or holidays. AWS participants will continue to



have the same basic work requirement of eighty (80) hours within a bi-weekly pay period. FLSA employees must adhere to a 40-hour workweek.

Modification, Suspension, or Termination of AWS Program

If circumstances warrant, the AWS Program can be modified, suspended, or terminated for any individual or groups of individuals by the career/civilian manager and/or in its entirety by the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief has authority to modify or change AWS policies as the circumstances warrant.

Surveys

From time to time, participants will be requested to respond to surveys or other inquiries attempting to evaluate the success of the program. Complete and full participation is required.

Scheduling of Non-emergency Appointments

One of the goals of the AWS Program is to reduce short-term absences from the job. Employees are encouraged to schedule non-emergency appointments or other engagements outside required working hours.

AWS Deviations

The supervisor has the authority to make minor adjustments to an employee's approved AWS schedules in addition to the formal quarterly application periods as follows:

- Daily lunch period;
- Change the arrival or departure time due to a special circumstance; or,
- Make-up time for absences from core work hours within the respective pay period.
- Meet operational needs of Department and/or office.

9. Revocation of AWS Privilege

First-line supervisors and career/civilian manager will not limit, deny, or withdraw an employee's privilege provided under this AWS Program as a form of retribution for an unrelated infraction. Employees may, however, be disciplined for abuse of the AWS Program. This could include restricting arrival and departure times or losing the AWS privilege. Abuses include, but are not limited to:

- Falsification of time accounting records.
- Excessively long lunch periods without prior supervisor approval or appropriate time reporting.
- Frequent instances of documented tardiness or absences from work without prior first-line supervisor's approval.
- Failure to sign the daily log sheet timely and consistently.



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- Participation in non-work related activity (excluding the rest period) during scheduled work hours.

10. Responsibilities

Agency Head

The Fire Chief (or a designee) will function in the same capacity as in all matters affecting the Fire/EMS Department, which is to provide leadership that will ensure the successful accomplishment of those duties and responsibilities the Department is charged with through Charter or other State or County laws, rules, regulations, or procedures. Specifically, the Fire Chief will dispose of any disputes or grievances arising from the implementation of the AWS Program.

Career/Civilian Manager

The career/civilian manager will support and assist the Fire Chief in the daily administration of this program, ensuring that the program does not conflict with the priorities of that office. The career/civilian manager will be responsible for approving/disapproving all AWS requests submitted by the employee(s).

First-Line Supervisors

- First-line supervisors will assure that productivity and the quality of work is sustained at a high level, and that adequate and sufficient procedures to monitor staff attendance and work practices are instituted to ensure same.
- The first-line supervisor will provide initial approval/disapproval of all AWS requests and any deviations submitted by the relevant section employees.
- The first-line supervisor also will assure there is adequate coverage of all delegated responsibilities during County business hours, including cross training of staff, balancing approved AWS schedules, and coordinating employee absences.
- Each pay period, he or she is further responsible for reviewing relevant daily log sheets to ensure correct reporting of time on employee's timesheets prior to approving and submitting of same to the timekeeper.

Employees

- All employees are charged with the responsibility of ensuring the continued high quality and quantity of work at all times and will make every effort to adhere to the agreed upon alternative work schedule.
- It is the responsibility of the employee to complete the daily log for accurate tracking of work hours.
- In the absence of a supervisor, the employee may be responsible for coordinating work efforts with other employees. An employee will conduct him or herself as a professional at all times.



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- The employee further agrees and understands that work may be assigned from time to time outside of his or her specific job description to ensure adequate coverage of the office during regular County business hours.

AWS Committee

To assist the Fire Chief in the implementation and administration of the AWS Program, a seven-person committee is to be established.

- The committee membership will consist of three people selected by the Fire Chiefs staff members, three representatives selected by the H-Scale Executive Board representative, and an AWS Coordinator who is appointed by the Fire Chief.
- The coordinator is responsible for the general administration of the AWS Program. Generally, the coordinator will be the Lieutenant Colonel of Management Services.
- The committee will serve primarily as an advisory board to the Fire Chief and also as a liaison between individual employees and management.
- Another function of the committee is to act as a conciliator for matters that cannot be resolved among the career/civilian manager, supervisor, and employee.
 - Employee concerns should be submitted in writing to the AWS Coordinator.
 - When feasible, the committee will make recommendations for consideration by the parties involved within five (5) working days after receipt of the written documentation describing the circumstance.

11. Documentation

Documentation of alternative work schedules delineating the required daily hours of work within a workweek which has been agreed to by the career/civilian manager, supervisor, and employee will be written on a form document similar to Attachment 1.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS / ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1 - Application to Participate in AWS Program

Attachment #2 – Request for Overtime/Compensatory Time form

Attachment #3 - Flexclock

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT

Date _____

TO: _____
SupervisorFROM: _____
H-Scale Employee

RE: Application to Participate in AWS Program

I agree to abide by the policies stated in the Fire/EMS Department's Alternative Work Schedule Program and request the following Alternative Work Schedule (AWS):

_____ Regular (Traditional WS)	_____ Flexitour AWS
_____ 4 - 10 AWS	_____ Flexiday AWS
_____ 4 - 1/2 - 9 AWS	_____ 5 - 4/9 AWS

Arrival time: _____	Departure time: _____ or as follows:			
	Week 1		Week 2	
	Start	Stop	Start	Stop
Monday	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____	_____	_____

_____ Approved _____ Approved w/modification (s) _____ Denied

Explanation: _____

Effective: _____

First-Line Supervisor_____
Career/Civilian Manager

Accepted by employee: _____ Date: _____

REQUEST FOR OVERTIME/COMPENSATORY TIME
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT

DATE: _____ OFFICE: _____

EMPLOYEE NAME/TITLE: _____

DATE (S) OF OVERTIME: _____ NO. HOURS: _____

DATES (2) OF COMP TIME: _____ NO. HOURS: _____

APPROXIMATE COST: _____

EXPLANATION OF NECESSITY FOR ADDITIONAL HOURS (be specific):

AUTHORIZED AND APPROVED:

Yes _____ No _____ Yes _____ No _____ Yes _____ No _____

Supervisor

Career/Civilian Manager

Fire Chief

REMARKS:

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT AWS PROGRAM
DAILY LOG**

ATTACHMENT 3

PAY PERIOD: _____

OFFICE _____

TIME IN	EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE	COMMENT	TIME OUT	EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE	COMMENT	PRODUCTIVE HOURS

FLEXCLOCK

06:00 A.M.	MORNING
06:30 A.M.	FLEX BAND
07:00 A.M.	
07:30 A.M.	
08:00 A.M.	
08:30 A.M.	
09:00 A.M.	
09:30 A.M.	CORE HOURS
10:00 A.M.	
10:30 A.M.	
11:00 A.M.	
11:30 A.M.	
12:00 P.M.	
12:30 P.M.	
01:00 P.M.	
01:30 P.M.	
02:00 P.M.	
02:30 P.M.	
03:00 P.M.	
03:30 P.M.	
04:00 P.M.	
04:30 P.M.	EVENING
05:00 P.M.	FLEX BAND
05:30 P.M.	
06:00 P.M.	