



Scarborough Fire Department

Scarborough, Maine



Standard Operating Guidelines

Book:	Organization
Chapter:	Personnel, Policies & Procedures
Subject:	1330 - Per Diem Employee Shift Assignment & Scheduling
Revision Date:	10/26/10; revised 10/30/15, 5/14/20, 10/4/21
Approved by:	<i>B. Michael Thurlow</i>

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures to ensure that authorized per-diem shifts are appropriately staffed with trained individuals in a fair and equitable manner.

POLICY

The Scarborough Fire Department recognizes that employees working as per-diem firefighter/EMTs are part time employees and that they have work commitments outside of this department. This policy is intended to achieve a balance between the complexities of part-time employment and the critical need of maintaining staffing for emergency response.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all per-diem employees and addresses the scheduling process, the assignment of shifts, minimum requirements and employee responsibilities.

DEFINITIONS

- A. Assigned Shift – a scheduled shift that has been assigned to a per-diem employee to work on a recurring basis. Working and covering that scheduled shift becomes the responsibility of the employee it is assigned to. There are two (2) methods that shifts are assigned.
 - a. 8-Day rotation – A recurring shift which occurs every eight days. This 8-day rotating schedule places per-diem shifts in line with either the first day, or the second day, of one of the four existing full-time shifts.
 - i. Assigned Shifts include 10 and/or 12-hour shifts during daytime hours and 24-hour shifts split in two 12-hour blocks (day & night)
 - b. Day Shifts – shifts that are assigned to a specific day of the week (Monday – Friday) or day of the month for weekend shifts (Saturday and Sunday).
 - i. Per-diem employees with greater than 5-years of active service may request assignment to open Day-Shifts.
 - c. As of the effective date of this procedure Per-diem employees will not be assigned to more than two shifts or 24-hours per week. However, employees may pick-up additional shifts as long as they are under 48-hours per pay-week.

- i. Current employees with more than two Assigned Shifts (24-hours) per week, may keep them as long as coverage requirements are maintained.
- B. Open Shift – Any shift that has not been assigned to a specific employee (8-day rotation or Day Shift) is an Open Shift that can be requested by eligible employees through the scheduling system.
- C. Per Diem employee - Part-time employees who are paid on an hourly basis for working a part-time shift.
- D. 48-hour limit – Per-diem employees shall not be scheduled for, or allowed to work, more than 48-hours in any pay week without prior authorization for “over-hours” (this does not include being held over on an incident).

PROCEDURE

- A. The Fire Chief, and officers designated by the Fire Chief, have the discretion and authority to assign per-diem employees to meet the needs of the organization. Employees have no expectation of ownership for any assigned shift, station or apparatus. The Fire Chief may modify, redistribute, and/or reassign shifts at any time.
- B. The department will administer changes to shift assignments at intervals based upon the needs of the department. Instances may include changes to the schedule, hiring processes or when multiple vacancies exist.
 - a. These instances will be communicated 30-days in advance and personnel will have the opportunity to submit request for changes in assignments.
- C. Employees with Assigned Shifts who encounter life events that alter their ability to fulfill their assigned schedule may request changes, in writing, through the Deputy Fire Chief of Operations at any time. Such life events may include; changes in full-time employment including shifts or changes in child/elder care.
- D. The department uses the following as general guidelines for the assignment of shifts. However, performance factors such as prior attendance, work history, certifications, qualifications, demonstrated knowledge, length of service, along with the needs of the department will also be considerations.
 - a. New hires will be assigned to a 10 or 12-hour shift on the 8-day rotation or be assigned to two (2) recurring weekend (Saturday or Sunday) shifts per month.
 - b. Employees who have completed their first year of service may request an additional 12-hour shift on the 8-day rotation.
 - c. Employees who have completed 3 years of service may request an open 24-hour shift on the 8-day rotation.
 - d. Employees with greater than 5-years of service may request to be assigned to open Day-Shifts.
- E. Should changes in the per-diem schedule occur which displaces employees with Assigned Shifts, the administration will make every attempt to ensure the employee(s) are assigned to an equal number of hours (shifts) per week. This may result in changes to the assigned station, apparatus or days.
- F. The Department utilizes an electronic scheduling system to maintain a schedule of career (full-time) and per-diem positions. The administration of the schedule is the responsibility of operational officers designated by the Fire Chief.
- G. Per Diem employees will not be scheduled for, nor allowed to work, more than 48-hours during any pay week without prior authorization (approved over-hours). This limit does not include being held over on an emergency incident.

- H. Per-Diem employees with Assigned Shifts, either 8-Day Rotation or Day Shift, will automatically be populated into the posted schedule which will normally be posted six months in advance.
- I. Open Shifts will be filled by the on-duty Shift Commander each day for their respective shifts, for the subsequent 30 days.
- J. Employees may request Open Shifts on the posted schedule at any time utilizing the scheduling software.
- K. Open Shifts will be awarded to employees according to lowest number of hours first, followed by the earliest request.
 - a. Employees on the work restriction list or otherwise non-compliant will not be considered for open shifts.
- L. Employees that are assigned to the schedule either by Assigned Shift or through a requested Open Shift, are solely responsible for the coverage of that shift.
- M. Employees may utilize the trade board of the scheduling software to trade or drop assigned shifts with other eligible and qualified employees.
 - a. Offering an assigned shift on the trade board does not relieve the scheduled employee of the responsibility to work that shift.
- N. Per-Diem employees with assigned shifts, either 8-Day rotation or Day shift, may request to be removed from the schedule for instances such as conflicts with fulltime employment or scheduled vacations, provided it is done 30 days in advance.
 - a. Requests shall be entered utilizing the scheduling software. Emails and notice by telephone will not be considered.
 - b. Request to use Earned Paid Leave (EPL) accruals must be approved 30 days in advance in accordance with the town's personnel ordinance, Section 508.
 - c. Request for leave will not be granted for Independence Day, Thanksgiving, or Christmas holiday periods unless voluntary coverage is attained.
 - d. Unscheduled absences with less than 24 hours' notice, along with failures to fill an assigned shift will result in EPL being applied to those missed hours.
- O. In the case of illness, injury or family emergency, Per-diem employees are required to notify the on-duty Shift Commander of the occurrence with as much notice as possible.
 - a. Some illnesses and/or injuries may require documentation from a medical provider indicating the employee is fit for duty.
- P. Employees that are "held-over" or "forced" at their fulltime employment must contact the on-duty Shift Commander with as much notice as possible.
- Q. Absences from assigned shifts are documented by the department.
 - a. Repeated absences may be cause for the department to request supporting documentation and/or subject to progressive disciplinary steps when warranted.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. It is the responsibility of per-diem employees to manage, monitor, and comply with the published work schedule including staying in compliance with the 48-hour limit.
- B. Employee attendance for scheduled shifts is a basic expectation of work performance and is critical to maintaining public safety. The department will utilize progressive discipline to address issues related to attendance.
 - a. The first occurrence will be cause for a counseling memorandum. After a full one-year period during which the employee has properly covered all their shifts, this counseling memorandum will be rescinded from the employee's personnel file.

- b. The second occurrence will be cause for suspension of 4 consecutive per diem shifts (or equivalent). After a full two-year period during which the employee has properly covered all their shifts, this suspension notice will be rescinded from the employee's personnel file.
- c. The third occurrence will be cause for termination from the per diem program
- C. It is the responsibility of the per-diem employee to ensure contact information is current and accurate in the departments scheduling software. The department utilizes the scheduling software as the primary method of communicating for shift filling and other important messages.
- D. In order for Per-diem employees to remain a member in good standing and be considered an active per-diem employee eligible to accept shifts:
 - a. Per-diem employees assigned recurring shifts, either 8-Day Rotation or Day Shift must physically work 50% of those shifts per year to remain assigned to a recurring shift.
 - b. Per-diem employees that are not assigned recurring shifts must work a minimum of 12 shifts per year.
- E. It is the responsibility of each employee to monitor, manage and fulfill mandated employment requirements such as, but not limited to; respiratory fit-test, medical physical, EMS license recertification or other requirements.

REFERENCES

- A. Town Personnel Ordinance
- B. SPFA Collective Bargaining Agreement