

## **Department of Fire Services Time and Attendance Policy and Procedures**

The Human Resources Division (HRD) has the authority to issue policies governing the tracking of employee time and attendance. Agencies must follow these policies to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, collective bargaining agreements, the Red Book, policies and the Human Resource/ Compensation Management System (HR/CMS) standards.

The Department of Fire Services also has its own written policy for time and attendance which addresses issues not included in the Human Resources Division policy because they are unique to the Department of Fire Services. For example, procedure for employees to request vacation and personal time, procedures for authorizing comp time and early release on non-state declared emergencies, procedures for contract employees, procedures for Board members, etc.

### **Human Resources Division Time and Attendance Policy**

The Department of Fire Services follows the current Human Resources Division Time and Attendance Policy, which can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/time-and-attendance-policy>.

### **Highlights of the Human Resources Division Time and Attendance Policy**

All employees, including cabinet secretaries, division directors, agency heads, contract employees and unclassified staff must maintain daily time and attendance records including an appropriate accounting for leave utilized.

- The Department of Fire Services participates in the Self-Service Time and Attendance (SSTA) Module. There are several ways for an employee to enter their daily time:
  1. Reported time (record total daily hours) – limited to Agency Head and Deputy Agency Head.
  2. Punch time (record specific start and end times as well as time left for a meal and time returned from a meal each day) – all Department of Fire Services employees including contractor employees.
  3. Phoning or emailing hours into the MassHR Employee Service Center (ESC) on an emergency basis or in limited circumstances only – all Department of Fire Services employees including contractor employees.

Payroll is done on a “positive reporting” time basis. This means the employee is responsible for recording his/her daily time, supervisor or designee approves online, and agency human Resources/payroll staff approves any time reporting codes that require special approval. While best practice is daily this must be done on an at least weekly basis.

- Total hours worked and any leave time used by employees must be reported in HR/CMS every pay period (entering and approving time on a daily basis is recommended best practice; however, updating and approving daily records at one time each week is acceptable). All DFS regular employees will have a pre-loaded regular schedule. If the daily start or end time or meal time deviates from the pre-loaded time, the employee should enter the correct time.
- All DFS contract employees will NOT have a pre-loaded regular schedule and therefore they must enter their daily start or end time AND their daily meal time.
- Employees are required to sign in and out for an unpaid meal period on a daily basis in their timesheet. State law: minimum of 30 unpaid minutes for a meal after 6 or more consecutive hours of work.
- Employees are NOT required to sign in and out for paid rest/break periods.
- Overtime or compensatory time must be reported in the same pay period that it is earned. If overtime is reported late, it must be entered into HR/CMS and paid in the following pay period. The collective bargaining agreements all contain provisions about what constitutes premium overtime (some with unique criteria) and language for the timely payment of premium overtime.
- Employees “certify” their hours entered in HR/CMS are correct by clicking “submit”. Given the SSTA time entry deadline of **Thursday at 5pm** (Wednesday at 5pm if the following week has a legal holiday celebrated on a Monday during which payroll is running), time reported for Friday or Saturday of the same week are predicted hours. If the hours actually worked on Friday or Saturday (or Thursday preceding the holiday Monday of a payroll week) are different than what was previously submitted, the time should be changed on the timesheet that week if possible or the next week as a prior period adjustment.
- Employees or supervisors who falsely under-report or over-report the weekly hours worked by themselves or others for which they are approving time in HR/CMS may be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Employees may not share passwords or allow others to use their password to record their hours worked.
- The Human Resources Division reserves the right to audit employee time and attendance at any time. Agencies not in compliance with this policy will be notified and must become compliant immediately. Please note that during their regularly scheduled agency audits, the State Auditor’s Office reviews time and attendance records consistent with policy. Adherence to both the Executive Department time & attendance policy as well as an agency’s specific time & attendance policy is required. The State Auditor’s Office will be granted electronic access to time and attendance records so they will no longer be looking to inspect paper records of this type except for records that an agency has that pre-date their implementation of self-service time and attendance.

## **Authority**

In addition, the General Laws provide that the Chief Human Resources Officer shall have access to all records in the custody of all agencies within the Executive Office for Administration and Finance for the purpose of discharging the duties of his office. Additional authority is contained in the following source documents:

### Collective Bargaining Agreements:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/collective-bargaining-agreements-union-contracts>

### Red Book (policy for managers and confidential regular employees):

[https://www.mass.gov/doc/red-book/download?\\_ga=2.2651440.1437608633.1682948820-1562619470.1682948820](https://www.mass.gov/doc/red-book/download?_ga=2.2651440.1437608633.1682948820-1562619470.1682948820)

Contract Employees shall follow the terms and conditions of their employment contract and all addendums.

## **Department of Fire Services Time and Attendance Procedures**

### **Contract Employees -**

Contract employees must report their time & attendance on a daily basis. As directed by their Division Director and Division policy, contractors must record their time & attendance using activity reporting codes to attribute their hours to specific job functions. Contract employees must additionally follow their specific Division policy with respect to signing-in on a hard copy document in accordance with established standards. Contract employees employed under more than one position, with more than one supervisor, must submit a separate timesheet for each specific position. Contract employees may not accrue compensatory time.

**Overtime** – In order for a contract employee to receive overtime they must meet the following criteria:

1. Must have pre-approval from their supervisor and division director or designee.
2. Must work more than 40 hours in one position.

It is the contract employee's responsibility to enter their time into SSTA. It is the Supervisor's responsibility to validate that the information entered is correct before they approve the time and make corrections as needed. It is up to the division to document the approvals and keep the records in the event of an audit. For an example of how to enter Regular and Overtime Correctly please see Attachment A.

Contract employees must follow all of the terms and conditions in their standard contract form and addendums. Labor hours for time spent during approved travel must be recorded by the employee on their timesheet in accordance with the contract provisions. Contract employees are not allowed to work for DFS while on Fire Department duty; Sick Leave; Administrative Leave; nor Injured on Duty Leave regardless of whether or not the individual is physically capable of performing duties for DFS.

**Board, Council and Committee Members –**

Supervisors must submit and document written approval of per diem requests. These requests must be submitted to the Human Resources Department by **noon each Thursday**. Board members are not using Self-Serve Time & Attendance System.

**Daylight Savings Time –**

Employees must follow specific job aids during hours which overlap the change in daylight savings time. It is critical that employees follow the job aids carefully to ensure they are compensated for their full work performed and are not short-changed due to the change in daylight savings time, each spring and fall.

**Meal and Rest/Break Time –**

The State does not pay for lunchtime or dinner or meal periods. Meal period/lunch period **MUST** be recorded in the timesheet system and employees must record the start time of the meal period/lunch and the end time of the meal period/lunch.

Rest periods/breaks are paid and are to be used as a work break during the day. Because rest periods/breaks are paid they are **NOT** required to be reported in the timesheet system. Each employee may take a total of 30 minutes for rest periods/breaks during the day. They may either take one 15 minute rest period/break in the morning and one 15 minute rest period/break in the afternoon, or with the permission of their supervisor add this time to their meal period.

Under no circumstances may rest period/break or meal period/lunch be used to come in late or leave early. If you do not take a break for any reason, you do not have the option to carry it over to another day. Breaks are designed to allow employees to rest between work periods only.

For example, if you are leaving for the day at 2:00, you must record that you are leaving for the day at 2:00. You cannot record that your time-off is starting at 2:30 because you have not yet taken a morning and afternoon rest period. You cannot record that your lunch time is starting at 2:00 and ending at 2:30, and then never return from lunch. Another example, you cannot arrive late for work and indicate that you were on your break/rest period prior to commencing your work day.

**Vacation/Personal/Comp Time Use –**

Vacation/Personal/Comp Time off must be approved by a supervisor prior to the date requested unless there are extenuating circumstances, which are then justified in the post approval documentation. The approval process requires that an e-mail be sent to the supervisor requesting time off. This request must include the date or dates, time, leave type and total hours requested. If the supervisor agrees that the employee may take this time off, the original e-mail is forwarded back to the individual with the word "Approved" in the forward message area.

An example of how to request such time off is shown below:

I am requesting the following time off:

12/27/2012: 7.5 hours vacation

12/28/2012: 4:00 to 5:00 – 1.0 hour comp time

**Sick Time Use –**

Employees must contact Workpartners to report day-to-day sick absences and medical appointments. Workpartners is the absence and leave administrator for the Commonwealth's Executive Department. Workpartners can be reached at [1-833-640-2800](tel:1-833-640-2800) or through the Workpartners' consumer portal at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/workpartners-consumer-portal>. Customer Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

More information regarding WorkPartners is available at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/commonwealth-absence-and-leave-management>.

Calculation of time-off must be as follows -- Total hours worked minus total hours assigned.

An example is shown below:

Regular assigned work schedule is 9:00 to 5:00, 7.5 hours/day

Employee has been pre-approved for an extended lunch/medical appointment 10am to 2 pm

Employee normal lunch break is 12:00 to 12:30

Employee will record work hours as 9:00 to 10:00 = 1 REG

Employee will insert a row and record SIC in the TRC field and 3.5 in the Quantity field

Employee will record work hours as 2:00 to 5:00 = 3.0 REG

**Adjusted Hours and Alternative Work Schedule –**

The Department of Fire Services hours are within the bandwidth of 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. The Department of Fire Services standard work schedule is Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 5:00 for those who are scheduled to work 37.5 hours each week. For those who are scheduled to work 40 hours per week the standard schedule is Monday through Friday 8:00 to 5:00. Employee work schedules may be adjusted on an ad-hoc basis, called adjusted hours, in accordance with the procedures below. Employees may also request an alternative work schedule, such as 8:30 to 4:30 M-F. All requests for adjusted hours or an alternative work schedule must be within the prescribed bandwidth.

The ad-hoc adjustment of work hours and schedule changes are not a right and must be determined beneficial to the services provided by the Department of Fire Services and cannot adversely impact the mission of the Division or the Department. Job functions must never be rewritten to make the adjusted hours appropriate for the position/employee.

The Department of Fire Services will use the following criteria to determine approval of adjusted hours and alternative work schedules:

- The employee's presence is not critical during the standard work hours.
- Work unit productivity will be maintained and employee job functions must lend themselves to work products that can be monitored and evaluated.
- The employee does not have a current documented performance and/or attendance problem.
- The employee has not abused the program, with abuse being defined as:
  - Inaccurately recording time and attendance
  - Failing to share duties or cover for other employees
  - Decreased productivity when staying late or coming in early, indicating that

- the employee is not working when others are not around
- Habitually working long hours Monday through Thursday and then calling in sick on Friday (which may also be an abuse of sick time)
- Changing work schedule without prior approval
- Changing scheduled days off during a holiday week

### **Adjusted Hours –**

On occasion, it may be necessary to request an ad-hoc adjustment in the hours you normally work. The adjusted work schedule is hours worked Monday through Friday. Employees may not adjust their schedules to a compressed work week (i.e. working 4 or 4 ½ days per week). A compressed work week is defined as working extended days in order to eliminate a selected day during the week. The request to adjust hours should be submitted in the same manner as vacation/personal/comp time usage. The approval process requires that an e-mail be sent to the supervisor in advance to request the adjusted hours. This request must include the date or dates and the specific time and hours being adjusted. If the supervisor agrees that the employee may adjust these hours, the original e-mail is forwarded back to the individual with the word "Approved" in the forward message area.

Two examples of how to request adjusted hours is shown below:

My regular work day is 9:00 to 5:00, M-F.  
On 12/27/2012, I am requesting to adjust my hours to 8:00 to 4:00.

My regular work day is 9:00 to 5:00, M-F.  
On 12/27/2012, I am requesting to adjust my hours to 9:00 to 4:30.  
On 12/28/2012, I am requesting to adjust my hours to 8:30 to 5:00.

Upon receipt of the above written request to adjust hours, your supervisor would review office/unit coverage needs and approve or deny the request for adjusted hours. The request and approval must be done in advance. The adjusted hours procedure allows for limited, ad-hoc adjustment of hours and is not appropriate for recurring adjustment of hours.

### **Alternative Work Schedule –**

Employees may submit a request for an alternative work schedule using the Department of Fire Services Work Schedule Request Form, which should be submitted to your supervisor at least two weeks in advance of the requested schedule change. The alternative work schedule are hours worked Monday through Friday. Compressed schedules are not allowed.

Upon receipt of this written request, your supervisor will review office/unit coverage needs and attain senior staff approval prior to responding to your request. The Human Resources Department will record the approved change to the employee's schedule into the payroll system as the employee's default schedule.

Where required by the individual collective bargaining agreements (CBA) schedule change requests will be reviewed by the DFS Alternative Work Options Review Committee. Said Committee will include members of both management and Bargaining Units and shall be responsible for reviewing both approved and denied requests.

### **Comp Time Accrual/Overtime Requests –**

It is the policy of the Department of Fire Services to permit the accumulation of compensatory time or paid overtime for eligible full-time and part-time employees in cases of emergency or only when necessary to maintain operations and for good cause shown. Approval to work extra hours can be compensated by accrual of hours or by payment of overtime, in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreements and management Redbook. Contract employees are not eligible for compensatory time but may submit approvals for overtime.

In order for a full-time or part-time employee to receive overtime or compensatory time they must have pre-approval from their supervisor and division director or designee, except in the case of an employee or public health & safety emergency. In the case of such emergencies the supervisor and division director are to be notified in accordance with the divisions procedures. As a reminder, the use of sick time does not count toward the total hours worked in a week, for the calculation of compensation time and reporting overtime.

#### Best practices:

- An email approval can be used to document pre-approval or advanced verbal approvals, but must be stated as such.

If it is not an emergency, you have submitted a request, and have not received a response prior to the date you requested, contact your supervisor for direction before performing the service.

It is the employee's responsibility to enter their time into the Self-Serve Time & Attendance System. It is the Supervisor's responsibility to validate that the information entered is correct before they approve the time and make corrections as needed. It is up to the division to document the approvals and keep the records in the event of an audit, where supervisors will be expected to justify any discrepancies in the approval process. For an example of how to enter Regular and Overtime Correctly please see the DFS Learning Guides.

Compensatory time shall not be accumulated in excess of 120 hours per the CBA's for NAGE Unit 1, 3, and 6; MOSES Unit 9; and AFSCME-SEIU Local 888 Unit 2. Compensatory time shall not be accumulated in excess of 90 hours per the CBA for SEIU Local 509 Unit 10. The exception to this rule would be holiday compensatory time, which must be used within sixty days (60) of the official holiday.

At the end of each fiscal year, at the discretion of the Agency, an opportunity for staff to cash-out their earned compensatory time may be offered. The option to annually cash-out earned compensatory time is not a right and must be determined beneficial to the services provided by the Department of Fire Services and cannot adversely impact the mission of the Division or the Department.

**Self Service Time and Attendance (SSTA) –**

All regular, non-manager employees are set up to earn comp time as a default when they report hours in excess of their schedule. Comp time is entered the same way as regular time, by entering arrival and departure times. The system will automatically calculate straight comp time and premium comp time, in accordance with collective bargaining agreements. There is no need to use TRC codes to accrue comp time.

SSTA will NOT automatically calculate overtime, making entering overtime more challenging. In order to enter overtime a new row will need to be added to the timesheet on the day the overtime is worked. Enter arrival and departure times and include the appropriate TRC code. For an example of how to enter regular time, comp time, and overtime correctly please see the DFS Learning Guides.

**Early Release on Non-State Declared Emergencies –**

In order to facilitate a fair and equitable method of coverage at the Department of Fire Services, the agency shall implement an early release policy. This policy shall govern issues of management and phone coverage, sufficient to keep the agency open, when participating employees are sent home during snow days or other non-state declared emergencies.

For Stow, the agency shall assign a minimum of one manager and one non-manager on a rotating basis to stay until closing. For Springfield and Bridgewater, the agency shall assign a minimum of one employee, with management support from the Stow campus as may be required. Participation for managers will be mandatory, while participation for non-managers will be voluntary. Each manager and participating non-manager shall be selected from a master list for said purpose.

Each employee wishing to participate in this early release program shall sign up with their division director on the form provided (Department of Fire Services – Early Release Policy Form). Once a master list is compiled, it shall be separated into two parts, a manager and non-manager list. The order shall be established by a random drawing. Thereafter, selection shall be down the list on a rotational basis. Any new employee shall draw a number based on the total number of participants in either representative column. Once drawn, they will be inserted into the list based on that number. (i.e.) If there are 32 non-managers names on the list and the new employee draws the number 10 they would become number 10 on the list. The list shall continue from year to year.

Manager selected is expected to provide supervision to all remaining non-management staff. In addition, they shall handle all emergencies by providing assistance or calling appropriate staff as necessary.

Non-Manager selected shall remain at the reception desk to provide phone coverage and customer support.

If a participating employee is not at work or cannot stay due to medical issues emergency, the next respective employee (manager/non-manager) shall be selected as necessary. Employees shall be allowed to refuse an assignment once and then shall be selected for the next assignment. A second refusal will result in removal from the voluntary list.



In exchange for their participation, employees shall not be debited any of their accrued time nor placed off payroll for the period of early release under this agreement. In addition, they will receive compensatory time from the time of release until such assignment ends.

Participation for non-managers in the early release program shall be voluntary. Those employees who do not participate shall be deemed “non-participating employees”. Non-participating employees may elect to stay at work during non-state declared emergencies or go home utilizing accrued time: vacation, personal or comp, as approved by supervisor or manager. If a non-participating employee has no accrued time and elects to leave work, they shall be recorded as ‘NOP’ not on payroll.

The agency reserves the right to revise or revoke this program at any time, with or without notice. The agency head may require any employee, as he feels necessary, to remain at work in the best interest of the agency. If any participating employee is required to stay as directed by the agency head, they shall be deemed to have served an assignment and their name shall be passed over once as a credit for time served.

Those employees participating in the early release program expressly acknowledge by their participation, that this program is discretionary with the agency and shall not constitute a past practice on behalf of the Commonwealth or the Department of Fire Services.

This policy shall not affect any state declared emergency, which shall be governed by the directives issued by the Governor through the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security.

Although participation for non-managers is voluntary, it may be limited at the discretion of the agency head. Members of the State Police/FIU and employees, who are classified as essential, shall not participate and shall be classified as non-participating members as determined solely by the Agency Head.

### **Document History**

<b>Date Issued</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
2012	Original Policy Issued	01/28/2013
04/26/2016	Policy update and Reissuance	04/26/2016
10/09/2018	Policy update and reissuance	10/09/2018
07/24/2023	Amended for Work Partners	07/24/2023
01/08/2024	Minor edits	01/08/2024

**Department of Fire Service Alternative Work Schedule Request Form**

**Employee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Employee ID:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Define your work unit (please include name of unit, services provided, work flow, other members of the unit)

2. Describe your job duties, including supervisory responsibility if applicable.

3. Explain how your unit will function under the requested new schedule (include benefit to unit, coverage for entire week, etc).

4. Define proposed schedule include arrival/departure times and ensuring that only a five day/week schedule is proposed.

PAY PERIOD		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
WEEK ONE	CURRENT					
	PROPOSED					
WEEK TWO	CURRENT					
	PROPOSED					

5. Requested Start Date for new schedule: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee’s Signature

Date

Supervisor’s Signature

Date

Division Director’s Signature

Date

Operations Section Chief or Director of Admin Services Signature

Date

Deputy State Fire Marshal’s Signature

Date

HR Processed By: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

In accordance with collective bargaining agreements and the Red Book, DFS reserves the right to revoke approved adjusted work week schedules with the standard advance notice as may be required by collective bargaining agreements. Adjusted schedules will be reviewed periodically.

**Department of Fire Services – Early Release Policy Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby acknowledge that I have read the  
(Printed employee name)

Department of Fire Services Policy for Early Release on Non-State Declared Emergencies  
and I am volunteering to participate in the early release program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Employee signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)