



Scarborough Fire Department

Scarborough, Maine



Standard Operating Procedures

Book:	Organization
Chapter:	Personnel, Policies & Procedures
Subject:	1330 - Per Diem Firefighter/EMT Coverage
Revision Date:	10/26/10 revised 10/30/2015
Approved by:	<i>B. Michael Thurlow</i>

PURPOSE

The Town of Scarborough has implemented a per diem firefighter/EMT program to ensure timely, professional, and safe response to emergencies throughout the community when there may not be sufficient call members available to respond. The Scarborough Fire Department relies on this program for safe and adequate staffing. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures to ensure that authorized per diem shifts are appropriately staffed with trained individuals.

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 balance the need for flexibility of employee's shift coverage with the department's need to assure that all authorized shifts are staffed to provide a safe and effective response to incidents in our community.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all per diem employees.

DEFINITIONS

- A. Regularly assigned shifts – 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.
- B. Availability Shifts – shifts that are assigned on a monthly basis to per diem firefighter/EMTs that have indicated their availability to work them.
- C. Per Diem employee - Part-time employees who are paid on an hourly basis for working a part-time shift. The Fire Chief has the discretion to assign per diem employees to any apparatus, station, or open shift on an ongoing basis to meet the needs of the organization. Per Diem employees have no expectation of ownership with any assigned shift, shifts are not “permanent.” The Fire Chief may modify, redistribute, and/or reassign shifts any time.
- D. When to Work (WtW) – the department's scheduling and availability software program
- E. Weekend Shift – includes any portion of a shift between 2000 hrs. on Friday until 0800 hrs. on Monday.

PROCEDURE

- A. The Fire Chief has designated the Deputy Chief of Operations the responsibility of maintaining a schedule of per diem employees to fill the available authorized shifts. It is the intent of the Scarborough Fire Department to fully staff each authorized position every shift unless approved by the Fire Chief.
- B. Assignment of shifts, other than swaps, will be made by the Deputy Chief of Operations. Swaps may be made directly between employees on WtW.
- C. There are two types of shifts:
 - a. Regularly Assigned Shifts – Recurring shifts on a specific day each week at a specific station that an individual has been assigned to work. These shifts are grandfathered for those employees currently assigned one as long as they remain a member in good standing as outlined below. Once a grandfathered shift is given up it automatically becomes an Availability Shift.
 - b. Availability Shifts – shifts that are assigned on a monthly basis to per diem firefighter/EMTs that have indicated their availability to work them.
- D. Work hours - Per Diem employees are expected to be on duty at the appropriate time, date and station when they are assigned to a shift. Firefighter/EMT shifts start at either 0600, 0800, or 2000 hrs. depending on the shifts location and apparatus. Any deviation from this schedule must be approved by the Duty Officer or the Deputy Chief of Operations.
- E. Per Diem employees will not be scheduled for, and are not allowed to work, more than 39 hours during any pay week unless prior authorization is obtained from the Duty Officer or Deputy Chief of Operations (This limit does not include being held over for a late call).
- F. Shift swapping or filling – The department recognizes that scheduling flexibility is required in a per diem system that employs firefighter/EMTs that work full time in other departments and agencies. The department must also assure that all authorized shifts are filled with qualified individuals every day. In order to provide that flexibility employees are provided the opportunity to swap shifts as outlined below:
 - a. When a per diem employee accepts a shift it is their responsibility to work it, or if they are unable to work their scheduled shift they may attempt to cover it with another qualified individual as outlined below:
 - i. When a scheduled per diem employee is unable to work a shift they may offer it to other employees via WtW. Offering the shift to others through WtW does not in itself relieve the scheduled employee of their responsibility to cover the shift until it has been accepted and approved.
 - ii. Employees seeking coverage should plan for that coverage with as much advance timing as possible to assure a qualified candidate is able to fill the shift. Short notice or failure to plan will not be an acceptable reason for failing to obtain coverage.
 - iii. In the event the employee seeking coverage is unable to obtain it after posting it on WtW and calling those members certified to work on that apparatus, they are responsible for contacting the Duty Officer or Deputy Chief of Operations.
- G. Member in good standing - 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 who are assigned a regularly scheduled shift must physically work 50% of those shifts per fiscal year in order to keep that shift.
 - b. Per Diem employees that are not assigned regularly scheduled shifts, must work at least 12 shifts per fiscal year, including at least six (6) weekend or holiday shifts annually.

- c. Any exceptions to this section must be authorized by the Fire Chief.
- H. Consequences of not filling a shift – Since it is imperative that all authorized shifts are fully staffed, and in fairness to everyone in the per diem program the following actions will be taken:
 - a. The administration will track the reason(s) for failed coverage and deal with the individuals responsible for the uncovered shift administratively as outlined below:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. The third occurrence will be cause for termination from the per diem program.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. It is the responsibility of per diem employees to report to work at the beginning of each assigned or accepted shift.
- B. If a per diem employee is unable to fill their assigned or accepted shift, it is their responsibility to find a qualified replacement.
- C. If a per diem employee is ill, injured, or has a legitimate family emergency, it is their responsibility to notify the Duty Officer or Deputy Chief of Operations immediately. In these cases the employee will not be held responsible for covering the shift. Depending on the situation a note from a medical provider may be required upon the employee’s return to work.
- D. If a per diem employee cannot find coverage for a shift they are assigned or have accepted they must work the shift. The only exception will be as noted in section C above or if the situation was caused by being held over on a call from their regular fire/EMS shift or a “forced overtime” shift at their place of full time employment. Failure to fill their assigned per diem shift due to elective overtime will not be an acceptable reason for failing to cover their shift.
- E. It is the responsibility of all per diem employees to use the WtW software to submit their availability and to keep track of their assigned or accepted per diem shifts, including swaps, at all times. The only exception is for documenting partial shifts which must be coordinated through a Duty Officer due to limitations of the WtW software.
- F. It is the per diem employees responsibility to keep track of the hours they work in any given pay week and assure that they do not accept or work a shift that will cause them to exceed the 39 hour limit unless approved by the administration.
- G. It is the responsibility of the per diem employee to notify the Deputy Chief of Operations in writing two weeks prior to giving up a regularly assigned shift, in order to remain in good standing in the per diem program.

REFERENCES

- A. Town Personnel Ordinance
- B. Scarborough Paramedic Association Collective Bargaining Agreement