



**Division 11 Personnel Management**

**Chapter 12 – Leave policy**

March 2009

**POLICY**

This General Order shall establish a procedure for requesting leave, swap exchange, parameters, conditions and guidelines needed to ensure minimum staffing while at the same time provide for the usage of leave i.e. annual, sick and emergency leave.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Annual leave** - a benefit provide to employees for enjoyment time away from the job

**Sick leave** - a benefit provided to employees to provide for themselves and their immediate families in case of illness

**Shift exchange** - an allowance to an employee to exchange (swap) time with another employee in those cases where no leave is available, or in lieu of utilizing leave

**“Emergency” Annual Leave** – annual leave that is requested outside the normal procedures and is limited to situations in which an employee has a legitimate need to address the affairs of an urgent or personal nature

**PROCEDURES**

**1. Annual Leave**

**General Provisions**

All personnel working within the Emergency Operations Command (EOC) will be required to adhere to the provisions set forth within

*DIVISION 11 – Personnel Management  
Chapter 12 – Leave Policy*

this General Order. Personnel will be granted leave based on their years of service and in accordance with the existing Labor contract with Local 1619. In cases of the same seniority based on hire date, leave will be assigned using a predetermined random order within each class. A new random number will be assigned each year to ensure equity.

Vacation Leave will be distributed based on the following criteria:

- Employees with **less than 4 Years of Service** will receive Three (3) weeks/Four (4) shifts of prescheduled vacation leave.
- Employees with **4 to 16 Years of Service** will receive Four (4) weeks/Six (6) shifts of prescheduled vacation leave.
- Employees with **16 Years of Service and greater** will receive Five (5) weeks/Eight (8) shifts of prescheduled vacation leave.
- Employees will not receive more than two (2) weeks of vacation leave for each trimester
- Employees can only request annual leave based on his or her leave balance available.
- Employees who utilize annual leave for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will have their leave charged against their total annual leave hours allowed for the leave year.

**Leave Bid Rules**

An EOC leave process coordinator will be designated by the Lieutenant Colonel. The



coordinator will have one (1) representative from Suppression and one (1) representative from AEMS to assist in the process. Bid sheets will be distributed to all personnel within the EOC prior to the 21st of October, each year. Personnel will have until the first week of November to return the completed forms to the EOC leave coordinator, via their supervisor. The EOC leave coordinator will develop the leave calendar for review by December 1. After approval, leave will be entered into telestaff and bid sheets will be returned to the employees and a copy forwarded to the Emergency Operations Command office.

Employees, who insufficiently bid for vacation leave, will forfeit his or her remaining bid opportunities and will be required to request leave through the established day-to-day process. Vacation leave will be scheduled from Sunday to Saturday; **vacation leave cannot be split between weeks.** If an employee's shift changes, their vacation will be adjusted within that prescheduled vacation leave week.

A maximum of two (2) personnel may be granted annual leave per station for any time period. A fixed number of day workers and shift workers will be scheduled for leave for each day. Only two (2) Battalion Chiefs shall be scheduled on leave unless approved by the EOC Lieutenant Colonel. No more than one (1) shift officer assigned to AEMS shall be scheduled on leave unless approved by the EOC Lieutenant Colonel. Annual Leave will be granted based on years of service as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The hours considered will include the vacation leave period and will not exceed the total hours of annual leave earned during that leave year. Yearly-earned annual leave hours not used for vacation can be utilized for day-to-day leave. This leave should not exceed the total amount earned annually.

Day-to-Day leave shall be requested through the Battalion Officer and forwarded to the Department Staffing Officer following the procedures outlined in this General Order. Pre-approved annual leave shall be requested and confirmed through the Department Staffing Officer, thirty days prior to the start

of the employee's vacation leave date. Both day work and shift work personnel can request leave within 30 days of the requested date(s).

The Staffing Officer located in the EOC will be designated as the "Departmental leave coordinator" for all annual leave requests both scheduled (bid) and unscheduled day to day. He/she will approve/disapprove all requests for unscheduled annual leave.

- Unscheduled annual leave requests shall be made through the station officer to the battalion chief.
- The battalion officer shall be the only authorized person to request leave to the staffing officer. At no time will anyone other than the effected battalion officer shall request leave.
- Once unscheduled leave has been approved the staffing officer will enter the name of the employee into telestaff. This is to allow sufficient notice to the effective battalions.
- Day work employees shall only be allowed the maximum of three (3) day to-day leave positions per pay period. Shift work employees shall only be allowed one (1) shift of day-to-day leave per pay period.

## 2. Emergency Annual Leave

Employees recognizing the need in advance for "emergency" annual leave shall make this request to their Fire Battalion Chief/AEMS



Battalion Chief through their immediate supervisor. If the immediate supervisor is not available, the Battalion Chief or AEMS Battalion Chief shall be contacted. On the other hand, employees recognizing the need for “emergency” annual leave on short notice shall make this request to their immediate supervisor or Fire Battalion Chief/AEMS shift supervisor, if possible. If neither is available, the Duty Chief shall be notified by the Operations Center prior to the start of the employee’s normal shift.

### **Approval**

The Fire Battalion Chief/AEMS Battalion Chief is authorized to approve “emergency” annual leave, not to exceed 24 hours. The Fire Battalion Chief/AEMS Battalion Chief is to ensure coverage of the affected shift.

In the absence of the Fire Battalion Chief/AEMS Battalion Chief, the Duty Chief Major is authorized to approve “emergency” annual leave for all Emergency Operations Command (EOC) personnel, not to exceed 24 hours. The Duty Chief will then be responsible to ensure shift coverage and to notify the Operations Center to include on the unscheduled leave report.

### **Emergency Annual Leave in Excess of 24 Hours**

Requests for “emergency” annual leave in excess of 24 hours shall be subject to the approval of the Fire chief or his/her designee. Supervisors with the authority to approve or deny “emergency” annual leave must exercise proper judgment in evaluation of requests on a case-by-case basis. Employees are to submit a completed leave slip to their immediate supervisor, upon returning to duty, reflecting the use of “emergency” annual leave.

### **3. Sick Leave**

Sick leave is available to all employees who are eligible to earn annual leave. All full-time employees earn 4.5 hours per pay period with periodic adjustments to assure that the employee earns 15 days per leave year.

#### **Allowable Uses of Sick Leave**

Allowable uses of sick leave are as follows:

- Sickness or disability which incapacitates an employee;
- Medical or dental appointments;
- Confinement at home because of quarantine;
- Illness of member of the employee’s household;
- Birth of a child in accordance with Personnel Law, Section 16-225.02 (Family Medical Leave Act);
- Illness of member of the employee’s household;
- Birth of a child in accordance with Personnel Law, Section 16-225.02 (Family Medical Leave Act);
- Adoption accordance with Personnel Law, Section 16-225.02 (Family Medical Leave Act);
- Death of anyone in an employee’s family, not to exceed five (5) working days. Family shall include employee’s spouse/partner, child, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, brother/sister-in-law, or son or daughter-in-law.

#### **Employee Responsibilities**

Uniformed employees of the Emergency Operations Command shall provide sick leave requests to the Fire/EMS Operations Center no less than one (1) hour prior to the start of their duty tour. The employee shall also contact their immediate supervisor prior to the start of their duty tour. It is the



responsibility of the employee to assure that the proper notification is made.

Uniformed or administrative personnel in support or administrative positions shall contact their supervisor to request sick leave prior to the start of their normal work hours. When employees know in advance that they need to use sick leave (doctor, dental, scheduled surgery, etc.) these employees must notify their station supervisor no less

than 24 hours in advance so that adequate staffing can be maintained. Shift personnel shall, if possible, make all necessary appointments on their scheduled days off. Supervisors may deny requests which impact daily staffing.

Employees must call in for sick leave each day unless they are under a physician's care for an extended period (greater than three workdays) or in the event of a medical emergency or death in the family. In the event of a death in the family or a medical emergency, the employee is responsible to make notification to their supervisor as soon as reasonably possible.

Employees who are on sick leave would not be expected to leave their residence during hours they normally work. Exceptions would be to obtain medication or necessary medical services. The employee may be required to notify their supervisor of the Fire/EMS Operations Center when doing so, and may be required to provide verification of their whereabouts. Employees who are on approved sick leave are prohibited from performing employment outside of the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department.

As essential employees, personnel have the responsibility to ensure that their outside conduct, membership and/or part-time employment does not interfere with their

ability to report for duty with the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department. Employees shall provide written certification of illness from a licensed physician for all sick leave usage when and wherever the station supervisor deems it appropriate. The Departmental Staffing Officer shall monitor sick leave usage on a daily basis. In those cases where a pattern of sick leave abuse is identified he/she shall provide this information to the battalion and station officers. Employees who violate this policy or fail to obtain and provide written verification shall be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **4. Shift Exchange**

Shift exchanges are a privilege permitted under the Labor Agreement between Prince George's County and the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 1619.

#### **General Provisions**

- All requested shift exchanges must be approved by the appropriate supervisor(s) (station officer or shift commander).
- The individuals exchanging shifts must be of equal capabilities as noted in General Order 01-12 as well as "driving status," County certifications, and officer status. Firefighters and Fire Technicians may exchange shifts, with the appropriate approval, provided that the provisions of General Order 01-12 are met. EMT-I's may exchange shifts with an EMT-P, but only if the other partner is an EMT-P. Personnel in Intern status shall not work together as part of a two (2) person crew.
- Shift exchanges are to be documented on a "shift exchange form"; noting who is working for whom and the date of the exchange. Both employees



agreeing to the exchange should sign the same leave slip. If this cannot be done, then each one must submit a separate leave slip indicating that they agree to the exchange. It should be submitted to the appropriate supervisor no less than four (4) days prior to the date of the exchange. Failure to do so may result in the request being denied.

- Once the shift exchange has been approved, the individual who agreed to work is ultimately responsible to assure the shift is covered.
- If the individual agreeing to cover the shift is unable to do so, they must make every effort to contact the individual who they agreed to work for and cancel the shift exchange. Additionally, they must contact the appropriate supervisor prior to the scheduled reporting time and advise him/her that they are unable to work as agreed.
- If the individual who agreed to work fails to report, fails to notify the appropriate supervisor, or is unable to be contacted, the individual may be subject to disciplinary action and/or charged with Absent Without Leave. The individual who failed to report may also have his/her shift exchange privileges suspended.
- If the individual who agrees to work fails to show due to sick leave, that individual shall provide written certification of illness from a licensed physician. Failure to produce the required documentation may result in disciplinary action and shift exchange privileges suspended.
- If the individual who agreed to work is unable to do so and cancels the shift exchange, as outlined above, and the normally scheduled individual fails to show, the normally scheduled

individual will be charged with annual leave for the time off and disciplinary action may be taken.

- Frequent instances when a shift exchange is not handled as agreed,
  - First Violation- written warning, no exchanges for 30 days
  - Second Violation-written warning, no exchanges for 6 months
  - Third Violation-no further exchanges allowed unless approved by the appropriate Battalion Chief or AEMS Operations Commander.Supervisors are to keep their respective Battalion Chief or AEMS Operations Commander informed of all failed shift exchange incidents.

**NOTE:** Nothing above prevents supervisors from initiating actions consistent with the Department's disciplinary process, as appropriate.

## 5. Leave for Voting

All sworn personnel are encouraged to participate in their right to vote before or after their regularly scheduled work hours.

All shift work personnel who are unable to participate in their right to vote before or after their regularly scheduled work hours, will be allowed two (2) hours of Administrative Leave (Civil Leave code 031 on the timesheet) for the purpose of voting not to exceed two (2) hours following the opening of the polls or two (2) hours prior to the closing of the polls. All individuals who require more than the allotted time for voting should request an absentee ballot through their county's election board. Information for each Maryland County Election office can be



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obtained by going to  
<http://www.elections.state.md.us>.

All Administrative Leave requests must be submitted, via leave slip, through the Chain of Command five (5) days prior to the scheduled election date.

### REFERENCES

Personnel Law 16-222

All Fire/EMS Personnel Memo #04-33, dated October 15, 2004

All Fire/EMS Personnel Memo (Revised) #08-28, dated October 17, 2008

International Association of Fire Fighters  
Local 1619 Civilian Bargaining Unit 2005-  
2007 Handbook

### FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

Shift Exchange Form

Shift Exchange Request

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Employee Number \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Who is working/ ID number	Time & Date Exchange to Begin	Time and Date Exchange to End	# of Hours
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

REMARKS: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME/TITLE

APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME/TITLE