



Lancashire
Fire & Rescue Service

REVIEW OF THE 42-HOUR SHIFT SYSTEM

**IRMP PROJECT NO.4
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Executive Summary

A review of the 42-hour shift duty system has been carried out during 2004/05. Drivers for the project have been the IRMP process and the requirement to maximise the efficiency of the workforce.

Over the past 12 months we have liaised with other Fire and Rescue Services and attended a number of meetings as a work group considering duty systems. Some Brigades have made known their intention to make radical changes to working systems and practices; most have yet to materialise. It should be recognised that following twenty-six years of inertia, the issue of shift changes is now dynamic. In recent months the position of some Brigades has changed significantly and in some cases, the process has created considerable unrest among staff.

We have considered the European perspective as this determines UK legislative requirements. There is an ongoing debate in the European Union about proposed changes to the Working Time Directive surrounding a proposal to remove the opt-out clause. Although this is being resisted by the UK, we are mindful of the impact such a change would have on the fire and rescue service nationally. We are informed that no changes will occur for some time therefore we have excluded this from the review.

Over a number of years Government documents have been published that support a change to the shift system. There is also an apparent underlying discontentment of the firefighters shift system from the employer's perspective that can be traced back to the 1960's. Against this background we have been mindful that under IRMP principles, changes should be evidence based, low risk and incremental. For this reason we have made reference to other ongoing IRMP projects and the Emergency Cover Review, all of which will impact on any proposal to change the duty system. We have suggested a number of options that would realise financial savings and provide a more efficient service.

Although we have stopped short of recommending a wholesale change, we are of the view that the long term aim should be for station managers to utilise resources including staff as required to meet local needs. As a consequence each station or group of stations would be managed independently, which in turn would create maximum flexibility for both the Service and staff.

We have considered the existing system and conclude that where a 24-hour instant response is required, the 2.2.4 system is a relatively low cost option. Any change that maintains a 24-hour instant response will be limited in terms of efficiency savings. We have looked at shifts of 8 hours or 12 hours duration and make a recommendation that existing shifts be changed to 12 hours. This would bring the system into compliance with the Working Time Regulations and be a step towards a more flexible work system.

Also considered are the start/finish times of shifts. We point out that the operational profile peaks at 20.00 hours, and contend that maximum Community Fire Safety (CFS) benefit would be gained by changing shifts at 0600 and 1800 hours, or 0900 and 2100, the latter considered to be the more effective approach.

In consideration of managing resources, we have found discrepancies in the management of leave across LFRS. The rules in respect of absence may need to be reiterated and a robust approach to the management of absence maintained.

We have looked at crewing levels and in so doing identified that a reserve could be created which is effectively the difference between normal and minimum crewing. The surplus staff would work on day duty and provide an additional resource for CFS work.

Creating a reserve would require consideration of covering staffing deficiencies. To cater for this we have suggested developing the principles outlined in the 2003 Pay and Conditions Agreement in respect of mixed crewing and over-time. A more ambitious option will be to introduce a 'bank' duty system, similar to an established practice operating in the Health Service.

Subject to satisfactory risk profiling flexible / variable crewing is the way forward. Options for consideration are:

- A system utilising a 'strategic reserve', whereby staff work the traditional 2.2.4 system supplemented by six early shifts or six late shifts.
- The grouping of stations for staffing purposes.
- Flexi-time 42-hour working combined with a retained duty system.
- Systems incorporating annualised hours.

Overall we are of the view that, whilst improvements can be made that will realise efficiencies, converting an idea into a workable solution requires careful consideration. No matter how packaged, a change that is seen to reduce operational cover will be subject to challenge. Therefore we consider it essential that recommendations for change must adhere to the IRMP principles.

Summary of key points and recommendations

Key point 1: Other IRMP projects and the Emergency Fire Cover Review will impact on operational duty systems.

Key point 2: although the current shift system has maintained industrial stability for 26 years, issues have been repeatedly raised in reports dating back to the 1960's that indicate an underlying discontentment from the employers' side.

Key point 3: Firefighters are deemed to be night workers. Information provided by Occupational Health shows that night workers are at greater risk of heart disease. LFRS currently have no reports of staff suffering from the effects of shift work. This should be borne in mind when considering shift changes.

Key Point 4: The current shift system does not comply with the Working Time Regulations but until changed it is deemed to satisfy as a collective workforce agreement .

Key point 5: Since 1973, payment for working unsociable hours is included in the basic firefighters salary.

Key point 6: There is no justification to consider team 'bonding' as a priority in the modern Fire and Rescue Service, therefore this should not be seen as a barrier to change.

Key point 7: Operational activity levels increase steadily during the hours of 0800 – 2000 hours and over the week are generally highest at weekend. False alarms account for the bulk of mobilisations.

Key point 8: A change to 8-hour shifts is a workable option that may improve business continuity. The allocation of leave will alter, thereby realising some efficiency gains. The option however maintains 'closed' watch working and is likely to be unpopular with staff.

Key point 9: A change to 12-hour shift working is a viable option.

Key point 10: The managerial approach has become more performance focused. The LFRS work routine has recently been amended to reflect this, and managers now have discretion in day to day management .

Key point 11: The 'strategic reserve' may be a realistic option for selected stations in LFRS. Prior to any change, consideration should be given to the potential impact on the Lancashire risk profile.

Key point 12: Changing from 2.2.4 to a rota that provides an instant daytime response will realise efficiencies in terms of staff numbers. Subject to satisfactory risk profiling this may be an appropriate duty system for LFRS.

Recommendations:

1. A more co-ordinated approach should be taken to removing staff from the shift system to other references.
2. The allocation of leave should be managed in accordance with SO\ADMIN\50.
3. There should be a hierarchy of status for the taking of leave.
4. A robust approach should be maintained to the management of sickness.
- 5.. A 'bank' duty system should be established as a method of providing work for staff seeking to work flexible hours.
6. Retained and/or off duty wholetime staff should be utilised to cover for short-term unexpected absences (i.e. uncertified sickness). This may be by overtime, an agreed mixed crewing system, or the development of a 'bank' system.
7. Shift start/finish times should change to maximise efficiency in relation to Community Fire Safety activities.
8. LFRS should not make a wholesale change to an annualised hours system. The facility is an option for staff seeking to work flexible hours as per SO\ADMIN\50 section 28.17.
9. Local management of staff should be the long-term aim. Station managers should be empowered to manage staff within agreed guidelines.

Introduction

The key driver to achieving the overall aim of making Lancashire a safer community is through the process of Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP). This should improve efficiency by way of freeing up resources and making the Service available at times when most needed by the community. Through this process Lancashire Combined Fire Authority has recognised an improvement opportunity and as a consequence the IRMP Action Plan 2005-6 contains a commitment to review the 42-hour shift system. This report seeks to explore that potential and where appropriate will provide recommendations for improvement.

Scope

The 2003 Fire Service Pay and Conditions Agreement between Fire Authority Employers and the Fire Brigades Union set out the principles for duty systems. This was redefined in the revised Grey Book (6th edition) where it was made clear that any change to the existing recognised duty systems; Shift, Day crewing, Retained, Day duty, Flexible duty must conform to the those principles and where disputed, would be referred to the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP). Any changes proposed in this report will conform to paragraphs 3 to 5 of Section 4, Part A of the Grey Book.

This report will consider only the 42-hour shift system.

Terms of Reference

To complete the task a project team was established comprising officers considered having the requisite skills to complete the review and deliver a report covering the issues impacting on any proposals for change.

The commitment to review the 42-hour shift system is a continuation of an overall review of duty systems that commenced in 2004 with a review of the Day duty and Flexible duty systems. There are aspects relating to this review that have been previously considered and where appropriate, reference is made back to the reports produced in 2004.

Aim of the Review

The aim of the review is to consider the existing 42-hour shift system as worked by LFRS staff and in accordance with the IRMP¹, explore opportunities that will improve efficiency.

¹ Making Lancashire a Safer Community; Integrated Risk Management Plan 2005-6

The 2005-6 IRMP outlines the rationale for carrying out the review.

Three quarters of our wholetime staff are employed on this system. Staff expenditure relating to this system is significant and therefore an examination of the duty system must be carried out to ensure our resources are being used to best effect.

Project rationale/perceived benefits

- Flexibility in staff deployment
- Linking work patterns to activity levels and type
- Potentially more family-friendly working arrangements
- Opportunities for people from a wider range of backgrounds
- The potential to release time for preventative activity.

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2005-6

Background

The current 42-hour shift system has remained unchanged since it was introduced nationally into the Fire Service early in 1979. The 42-hour working week was agreed following the first national fire service dispute in 1978 and adhered to the following principles:

- A national standard of working across all local authority fire brigades.
- The requirement for all fire brigades to meet nationally laid down standards of fire cover in terms of fire appliances and attendance times.

In terms of working hours the system has brought industrial stability for over 26 years. However, prior to the introduction a number of issues led to prolonged and difficult negotiations, these included²:

- Limitation of stand-down time at night
- Meal breaks per 24 hour period
- The expected duties of operational staff
- The shift system (the employers favoured a 3-shift system, the FBU and Home Office were in favour of a 2-shift system)
- The right of Fire Authorities to change shift stations to day crewing
- The removal of beds on fire stations to be replaced by easy chairs for stand down periods
- The disputes procedure
- Acceptable crewing levels

² Discussed by Jones WA, BCC 2/92, Fire Service College

Since 1979 there have been changes to legislation and a number of reports published that make reference to shift duty systems. Namely; *In the Line of Fire*³, *Out of the Line of Fire*⁴, *the Bain Review*⁵ and the White Paper – *Our Fire and Rescue Service*⁶. Also Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a National Framework document outlining the priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. Both the 2004-5 and 2005-6 Framework documents direct authorities to consider the use of flexible shift patterns and working practices.

In 1995 the Audit Commission⁷ referred to the system as ‘constrained’ and made a recommendation that conditions of service should be reviewed with the aim of increasing flexibility. Long ‘stand down’ periods were criticised as a “real loss to the brigade” and the timing of shift changes, typically 0900 and 1800 were seen as problematic, i.e.

- The change of shift during the early evening peak time for calls can reduce operational effectiveness.
- The amount of time available for productive work by the night shift before stand down is limited.

In 1998 a Joint Committee report⁸ reiterated that the principle should be a shift towards prevention and that fire cover should be related to risk. Whilst no specific mention of duty systems is made, attention is drawn to the importance of fire-fighter safety when attending incidents. In this respect a review of shift working should be considered in light of other ongoing IRMP projects.⁹ In addition what must also be considered is the ongoing Emergency Fire Service Cover review, the outcome of which will provide a baseline for future developments.

Key point 1: Other IRMP projects and the Emergency Fire Cover Review will impact on operational duty systems.

In reference to duty systems, the Independent Review of the Fire Service (Bain Review) carried out in 2002¹⁰ sought to allow managers to agree locally:

- Shift patterns that fit with demand, offer a greater choice of working hours and are attractive to a diverse range of staff
- Different crewing levels at different times of day
- Mixed (wholtime and retained) crewing of appliances
- Arrangements to move staff according to requirements

³ Audit commission (1995)

⁴ Home Office (1998)

⁵ Independent Review of the Fire Service (2003)

⁶ ODPM (2003)

⁷ In the Line of Fire, Value for money in the Fire Service (1995)

⁸ Out of the Line of Fire – Modernising the Standards of Fire Cover (1998)

⁹ In particular project No.1, Develop a ‘Lancashire’ response standard. Project No.2, Incident task analysis and project No.3, the risk based review of stations and pumping appliances.

¹⁰ The Future of the Fire Service: Reducing risk, Saving lives (2002)

- Arrangements for overtime working
- Provision for maternity, paternity and adoption leave.

The ambitions of Bain were reproduced in the White Paper – *Our Fire and Rescue Service*¹¹, a document that makes suggestions for shift changes and provides examples for brigades to consider.

Like all local authority services, the Fire Service falls within the scope of the Local Government Act 1999 to seek ‘continuous improvement’ in the way service is delivered¹². This statutory obligation based on the preceding White Paper of 1998 – *‘Modern Local Government’*, placed emphasis on ‘modernisation and change’.¹³

The National Joint Council for Local Authorities (NJC) has declared a commitment to the local democratic control of fire and rescue services¹⁴ and to reflect the modernisation agenda the most recent edition of the Grey Book introduces a greater degree of flexibility.

It has been agreed that the Duty Systems and Hours of Duty section should reflect the Fire Service Pay and Conditions Agreement 2003.¹⁵

From the above there is evidence to support a review the 42-hour duty system currently worked by LFRS staff. Any recommendations for change must be set against the basic principles of IRMP, i.e. incremental, evidentially based and afford low risk to the organisation and our ability to deliver a high quality service to the local community.

Key point 2: Although the current shift system has maintained industrial stability for 26 years, issues have been repeatedly raised in reports dating back to the 1960’s that indicate an underlying discontentment from the employers’ side.

Legislative Provisions

The European Working Time Directive primarily governs legislation relating to working time. A proposed amendment is currently an issue of debate by the European Union. Although as yet there is no definite outcome, it would be remiss to disregard for the potential future changes. The following points are currently under discussion, the outcome of which are likely to impact on the fire and rescue service.

- The removal of the opt-out clause which permits an individual to work in excess of 48 hours per week.
- Extending the reference period for calculating hours worked, from 17 weeks, to 12 months.

¹¹ Our Fire and Rescue Service – ODPM (2003)

¹² Local Government Act 1999

¹³ Modernising Local Government, 1998 Consultation White Paper.

¹⁴ Fire Brigades National Employers Circular EMP/03/04

¹⁵ National Joint Council Circular NJC/01/03

- A revision of 'on-call' time to remove the distinction between active and inactive time.

The principle legislation affecting working patterns is as follows:

The Working Time Regulations 1998 (SI 1833)

- Implements Council Directive 93/104/EC (The European Working Time Directive).

The Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 1999 (SI 3372)

- Employers are required to keep detailed records in certain circumstances.
- Places further obligations in respect of workers work where time is partly measured.
- The Secretary of State required to consult and to publish information and advice in respect of rights and obligations.

The Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2001 (SI 3256)

- Provides an entitlement to four weeks leave per year.
- Leave entitlement during first year of employment.

The Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2002 (SI 3128)

- Places restrictions in respect of 'young workers'.

The Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (SI 1684)

- Includes previously excluded organisations into the scope of the Regulations.

The following guidance documents have been used to assess the implications for fire and rescue authorities in respect of duty systems:

1. IRMP Guidance Note 6 issued by the ODPM
2. Counsel opinion in the matter of The Working Time Regulations
3. Summary of Guidance Note 6.¹⁶

Under s.2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 every employer is required to ensure "so far as reasonably practicable" the safety, health and welfare of all their employees. This implies a restriction on the employment of any employee for excessively long hours, or unsuitable shifts likely to cause physical or mental ill health, or precipitate fatigue-induced accidents. It also implies the provision of adequate intervals for meals and rest.

The Working Time Regulations limit the maximum working time of a worker and confer certain other rights in respect of the length of night work and rest periods.

IRMP guidance note No 6 states that for the most part the Working Time Regulations apply to fire services and all reasonable steps should be taken to manage activities in a way that complies with the Regulations.

¹⁶ Document 2 & 3 have been prepared by Richard Leiper (December 2003) and kindly supplied by Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service.

The existing fire service shift pattern contravenes the Working Time Regulations, but is allowed to continue, as it is deemed to have been accepted by collective agreement. Any new shift pattern would have to satisfy the Regulations, either through compliance or agreement between employers and worker(s).¹⁷ The main areas of contention are as follows:

Health Effects and Hours Worked at Night

Under the Regulations firefighters qualify as 'night workers'. The Regulations require night work¹⁸ to be an average of no more than eight hours in a 24-hour period. Under certain circumstances this may be an absolute limit and in respect of firefighters, there is a difference in approach between the ODPM and Counsel opinion (Leiper).

ODPM guidance considers the risk to firefighters to be reduced by procedures and the provision of Personal Protective Equipment and therefore the absolute limit is deemed not to apply. Conversely, Leiper holds the view that the approach to risk should be considered as a comparison between day and night work. He argues that in terms of the Regulations, there is no comparison between the risks at night and those at day. Therefore together with the hazardous nature of the work, the absolute limit should apply. Whichever of the two approaches is adopted, it should be viewed as good management practice to reduce hours worked at night to the minimum.

The impact of shift work on workers' health is an area where little research has been carried out. Although an issue of confidentiality, against this background the Occupational Health Department currently have no incidence of staff reporting ill effects from shift work. With regard to health, this is the base line from which any potential shift changes should be considered. Information provided by OHU dept shows that night shift workers are at higher risk of heart disease and as a consequence, any potential shift change should take account of this.

Key point 3: Firefighters are deemed to be night workers. Information provided by Occupational Health shows that night workers are at greater risk of heart disease. LFRS currently have no reports of staff suffering from the effects of shift work. This should be borne in mind when considering shift changes.

¹⁷ The relevance of collective agreements cannot be over emphasised. The grey book is deemed to be a collective agreement arising from collective bargaining. The ongoing discussions by MEP's in respect of the removal of the opt-out clause for individuals is likely to press for this right of individuals to be replaced by a process incorporating collective agreement.

¹⁸ Defined as a period of 7 hours, which includes the period from midnight to 0500 hours. The period is usually taken to be 2300 hours to 0600 hours (subject to local agreement). A night worker is defined as a person who works at least three hours between 2300 and 0600 hours.

Insufficient Break Between Night Shifts

A daily rest period of not less than 11 consecutive hours must be provided in each 24-hour period. The 9-hour break between the first and second night falls short of this requirement. However, this rule does not apply to the period between night shifts where this is less than 11 hours and the shift pattern is part of a collective agreement.

The existing duty system as outlined above meets the Grey Book, Section 4, Part A, paragraph 7 and is accepted as a national collective agreement. Changes under the IRMP process to a system that meets local need will require agreement at local level between management and the representative bodies.

Key Point 4: The current shift system does not comply with the Working Time Regulations but until changed is deemed to satisfy as a collective workforce agreement.

Existing Arrangements – The 42-hour Shift System

The current system adheres rigidly to earlier editions of the Grey Book and is popular with staff. The key features being an average of 42 hours per week working based on the following principles:

- 24 hour periods to be divided into day and night shifts
- The night shift to be not less than 12 hours
- At least two periods of twenty-four hours free from duty per week
- Leave days to change progressively each week
- No continuous duty periods of 24 hours
- 3 hours allocated for meal breaks per 24 hour period

In practical terms the pattern worked is a continuous 24-hour duty comprising:

2 day shifts (0900 to 1800))	
2 night shifts (1800 to 0900))	Referred to as the 2.2.4 system
4 rota (rest) days ¹⁹)	

¹⁹ There are claims that the system is 5 duty periods followed by 3 rest days. The rationale being that the second night shift includes 9 hours of duty on the 5th day.

2.2.4 system provides for 24-hour operational cover on all stations working the 42-hour shift system. The principle of 42-hour working is rooted in a Home Office report of September 1977²⁰ which concluded a 42-hour week would be better than 40 hours working. The reason being that 42-hours is divisible into the total number of hours per week and thus helps to achieve constant crewing levels with the same crew working together. In its broadest sense the time at work may be divided as follows:

- Operational activity
- Work period
- Rest breaks
- Stand down time

In practice the duty system has been designed to provide fire cover to meet the now withdrawn national standards of fire cover. 24-hour availability has traditionally been to deal with emergency incidents, with little regard for other work, except for the maintaining of operational readiness. It is beyond the remit of this review to consider the detail of actual work carried out whilst on duty as this has been dealt with elsewhere.²¹ However, we are aware of the increased demand on the service and the requirement to maximise use of resources wherever possible.

In 1977 a condition of the 2-shift system was a reduction in stand down time. Shortly afterwards Lancashire work routines were changed and crews were stood down:

- During shifts that fell on a Public Holiday
- At times when admin staff were absent on Public Holiday
- Between midnight and 0700 hours.

From 1979 onwards the time during the night shift from 2100 to midnight (slight variation at weekend) was productive time. After some time this was changed to 'non programmed' working time.²²

In reality, this period became stand down time in all but the most exceptional of circumstances. This has been recognised in a review of non-programmed working²³ and as a consequence the station routine has been modified. The work period has been increased by 2 hours per night shift. Compared to the previous work routine, this represents a 13.3% increase in available night

²⁰ Jones WA (1992)

²¹ Bent (2004)

²² A period when at the discretion of the Watch Officer, Station Commander, training, instruction and maintenance can be suspended with the proviso that they shall have the unquestioned right to continue station activity, including night exercises where they consider it to be necessary. SO\ADMIN\80 (recently revised).

²³ Bent D (2004)

work and realigns LFRS with the overall 29% stand-down time identified by Bain²⁴ as the expected level set out in the Grey Book.

Key factors of the current system 2.2.4 are as follows:

- 24 hour constant crewing and instant response
- It does not meet legislative requirements in respect of the Working Time Regulations, although is deemed to satisfy as a collective agreement. Changes will need to comply with the Regulations.
- The system is traditionally 'work routine' driven.

Given that the working week is divided into four watches, at any one time 25% of the workforce are on duty. Crewing variation provides between 4 to 6 riders per pump. There are 18 stations in LFRS conditioned to the 2.2.4 system, which provide crewing for a total of 24 pumps.

The recent changes to Service Order SO\ADMIN\80 have increased the time available for IRMP activity whilst permitting a degree of flexibility to watch managers. The approach is to focus on outputs in terms of station performance, which is a relatively new concept and a requirement of a modern Fire and Rescue Service. To assist this process a performance management framework has been introduced. Although in its infancy the focus on demonstrable and measurable performance will become an ever-increasing driver of station work activities.

The 2.2.4 System In Operation

To provide constant cover, 730 shifts per year must be worked (365 x 2). Discounting authorised absences the actual time available for work is 182.5 shifts per person (730 / 4). Features of this approach include:

- Simplicity in operation
- The ability to plan long-term
- Longer than average periods at work are reflected in long periods off duty.

In terms of leave allocation, data provided by the Audit Commission²⁵ suggests a combination of Grey Book Scale A, Scale B, Long-Service, leave and public holidays should amount to around 31 shifts absence per annum. According to the Grey Book, Scale A leave is a combination of duty shifts and non-duty shifts, which is acknowledged by the Audit Commission as a matter of interpretation by brigades. LFRS have recently rescheduled the leave allocation to a more simplified method of calculation and leave is now programmed to coincide with actual shifts that would otherwise be worked.

²⁴ Bain review at page 23

²⁵ In the line of Fire p36, although it should be recognised this data is prior to the current edition of the Grey Book

The sum total of shifts lost to leave for a firefighter with 5 years service is 32 shifts per annum.

To provide constant crewing, a factor of 1.39 is currently calculated into the formula for determining crewing levels. This means that for every fire-fighter that provides 24-hour crewing, 1.39 fire-fighters must be employed. Wherever this calculation works to a fraction, the figure will be rounded up to the next whole number. This figure, known as 'the ridership factor,' is intended to cater for legitimate absences; i.e. annual leave, training and sickness.

In terms of payment, the basic salary of operational staff is pro-rata equal to uniformed staff who work a normal day duty (flexi-time) system; e.g. fire safety and training staff. The only difference being that shift working on a Public Holiday attracts enhanced rates of pay, whereas day staff will be rostered to take leave.

The 2003 pay and conditions agreement is silent in respect of unsociable hours working. Although this would imply that there is no financial enhancement for working unsociable hours; i.e. nights and weekends, an agreement reached in 1973 describes a weekly rate for a 'Standard Working Week' to include an additional payment for working unsociable hours.²⁶

Key point 5: Since 1973, payment for working unsociable hours is included in the basic firefighters salary.

The Management of Resources

Authorised Leave

We have considered the system in terms of managing absence. SO\ADMIN\50 is explicit in how annual leave should be allocated via the eight-group system. Despite this we have found widespread variations with multiples of staff on leave at any one time²⁷. This is a contributory factor in the often-reported staff shortages.

In addition personnel are entitled to take Public Holiday leave and long service leave by local agreement. Accrued 'time-owing' has the same status as other leave. We have found widespread instances of leave being booked far in advance, the effect of which can compromise crewing and can be a contributory factor in reduced crewing levels.

In addition, staff are at times moved from shift work to other projects, the effect of which has an impact on crewing levels.

²⁶ NJC – The 1973 Agreement. At that time (7 November 1973) the STANDARD WORKING WEEK was 56 hours. From 7 November this was reduced to 48 hours per week and from 1979 reduced again to 42 hours per week.

²⁷ See Appendix 1

Special leave has been examined and we are aware that 276 instances of special leave were granted over a twelve-month period.

It is recommended that leave allocation should be managed in a hierarchical structure. An example is as follows:

Programmed annual leave	Absolute once approved
Leave taken by local arrangement	Absolute once approved
Public Holiday leave	Approved subject to time limits (to be agreed).
Accrued Time Owing	Approved only at the exigencies of the Service and may be cancelled to meet operational needs.

Sickness Absence

Sickness absence has been examined and whilst LFRS does compare well against the national picture, it is sometimes the case that sickness absence is often in patterns of 2 days, 2 nights or a full tour. This suggests sickness absence is sometimes tailored to the shift pattern regardless of the reason for absence.

The recent amendment to SOADMIN\50 in respect of managing sickness provides an opportunity to maintain a robust approach to this issue.

Training course dates are posted on the network 'R' drive to facilitate local nomination. This system generally works well and most courses are attended. Some difficulty arises on occasions due to the late announcement of course dates. This causes pressure due to the precedence of other leave having already been programmed.

Recommendations:

- 1. A more co-ordinated approach should be taken to removing staff from the shift system to other references.**
- 2. The allocation of leave should be managed in accordance with SOADMIN\50.**
- 3. There should be a hierarchy of status for the taking of leave.**
- 4. A robust approach should be maintained to the management of sickness.**

Covering Absences

Consideration should be given to increasing the use of retained or off-duty wholetime personnel to cover for absences.

Attention is drawn to Circular NJC/01/03:

paragraph 3.3

“employees will be deployed to meet the requirements of the fire authority’s IRMP, including working at different locations.”

“employees will also be free to undertake retained duties where appropriate.”

Paragraph 3.8

“Employees will be free to undertake pre-arranged overtime at premium rates for no more than 24 hours per month.”

We are of the view that these extracts provide a basis for improved efficiency, whilst at the same time create opportunities for flexible working.

Subject to the ongoing European debate about the proposed amendments to the Working Time Directive, We believe greater use could be made of staff working the retained duty system, or wholtime staff working overtime in covering absences. We have considered a number of different approaches.

- Retained staff working on wholtime stations as and when available.
- Wholtime staff working additional hours
- The creation of a ‘bank’ system (similar to a long established practice in the National Health Service).²⁸

The general principle is that staff make themselves available for additional hours work. This could be in a number of ways;

- Staff could be available for call at short notice
- Staff could declare their hours of availability beforehand (details of notice etc. to be agreed). Work could be at any reasonable workplace (to be agreed).

Recommendation 5:

A ‘bank’ duty system should be established as a method of providing work for staff seeking to work flexible hours.

Reserve Function

The purpose of the reserve function is to remove excess staff from first line operational duties to carry out preventative work. In addition they may provide cover for both short and long term absences from operational rider positions.

²⁸ An example of a ‘bank’ system this is outlined at Appendix 2

Operational personnel on short-term sickness, long-term sickness or modified duties would automatically be transferred in to the reserve, whilst personnel attached to the reserve would make a move in the opposite direction. In order to support staff returning to full duty,²⁹ once transferred, staff would remain attached to the central reserve until such time that they are themselves transferred to an operational post to cover for sickness, training etc.

All individual centralised training except crew refreshers would be carried out whilst individuals are attached to the reserve function, thus reducing the number of shifts lost to training (including training leave) which currently stands at 3952.

A workable option would be to establish clusters of reserve personnel throughout the Service. However, there is likely to be negligible organisational benefit from this approach unless flexible emergency cover options are implemented.

The Cultural Issue

Culture in the fire service has featured in a number of published documents in recent years.³⁰ The traditional approach to fire service working has relied upon team working, often seen as crucial to the role of the fire fighter. The modern service is built upon role maps, skills and objectives, with multi-tasking key to the role of the firefighter. Whilst team working may be an asset, we do not see this as extending to the scale of team 'bonding' as discussed in the range of published documents. Staff have traditionally been detached to work on other stations and this has become increasingly common in recent years. Justification for maintaining the 'closed watch' working system can no longer be sustained as an absolute concept. Reasons for this are cited as:

- It is the prime contributor to the need to fit in to the 'family' culture³¹
- It is one of the barriers to increasing diversity³²
- The rigid watch culture has led to a closed working culture³³

²⁹ Shifts lost to sickness November 03 to October 04 were 5581.

³⁰ E.g. Equality and Fairness, Bain and the White Paper – *Our Fire and Rescue Service*

³¹ Equality & Fairness para.17.3

³² Bain page 66

³³ White Paper para. 8.8

Key point 6: There is no justification to consider team 'bonding' as a priority in the modern Fire and Rescue Service, therefore this should not be seen as a barrier to change.

Review Considerations

Guidance on duty systems is contained in Section 4 of the Grey Book. In principle, existing duty systems should operate on the basis that employees will undertake the duties appropriate to their role and be deployed to meet the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Authority's IRMP, including working at different locations. The basic hours are 42 per week (including meal breaks) and wholetime and part-time employees should be free to undertake retained duties where appropriate. Alternative duty systems to the existing should be based on the following principles:

- (1) Basic working hours should average forty-two per week (inclusive of three hours of meal breaks in every twenty-four hours) for full-time employees. Hours of duty should be pro-rata for part-time employees.
- (2) There should be at least two periods of twenty-four hours free from duty each week.
- (3) It should comply with relevant United Kingdom and European law, including the Working Time Regulations 1998, and Health, Safety and Welfare at Work legislation.
- (4) It should have regard to the special circumstances of individual employees and be 'family friendly'.

Matching Resources to Activity Levels

The primary aim should be to match resources to activity levels, which are outlined in the IRMP 2005/6³⁴

The operational profile of LFRS activity levels is shown at Appendix 3. What is apparent is that activity levels are higher during the daytime and decrease significantly at night. Despite this wide variation in operational activity, the fire cover Service-wide remains constant.³⁵ Some scope exists to match the availability of pumps in proportion to activity levels. However, care should be taken that this approach is not too simplistic. We are of the view that any recommendation to vary the availability of pumps should be based on a balance of risk profiling and operational activity.

³⁴ Making Lancashire a Safer Community, Integrated Risk Management Plan 2005-6

³⁵ There are some anomalies in that due to crewing difficulties, some retained pumps are unavailable at certain times. For the purpose of this review, it is assumed that all pumps are constantly available.

We have considered mobilisations by day of week and from Appendix 4 it can be seen that operational activity levels are at the highest on Saturday and Sunday.

We have considered types of incident attended. From Appendix 5 it can be seen that a combination of the three types of false alarms account for the bulk of mobilisations.

Key point 7: Operational activity levels increase steadily during the hours of 0800 – 2000 hours and over the week are generally highest at weekend. False alarms account for the bulk of mobilisations.

Findings from other Fire and Rescue Services

In 2004 it became apparent that many Services nationally were reviewing their duty systems. Against this background it was suggested that overall benefit would be gained if ideas were pooled together and with this in mind, meetings were held and hosted by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Many Services have yet to publish their intentions. However, a range of ideas has emerged from brigades nationally. Examples are as follows:-

- Changes to shift duration
- Changes to shift start / finish times
- Changes to work routine
- Systems involving the use of annualised hours (4 and 5 shift)
- The use of 'Strategic Reserve'
- Removal of pumps at night
- Change from 42-hour shift, to 42-hour flexible cover.

A great deal of time has been spent considering these ideas / proposals and we have sought wherever possible to find an evidential base to justify the rationale for change. We have considered the potential impact on LFRS and focused our review options into two categories:

1. Maintaining a 24-hour instant response
2. Variable / Flexible response arrangements

Maintaining 24 Hour Instant Response

Many Services appear to be maintaining 24-hour instant response. In so doing, options to make significant changes are somewhat reduced. Conversely a 24-hour instant response will ensure the level of fire cover will remain at the best available. The options outlined under this section offer the least in terms of efficiency gains, yet expose the organisation to the least risk.

We have considered different methods of maintaining a 24-hour response, whilst at the same maximising efficiency.

One of the advantages of the current 2.2.4 system is its simplicity in operation. Once established, with the exception of detachments to cover unexpected absences, the system is almost 'self-managing'. However, the cost of this is a lack of flexibility. We believe the use of retained or off-duty staff could be developed. It is likely that in doing so the administration in respect of staff management would become more time consuming than at present. We are of the view that this work would be an administrative function and should therefore be considered as part of the review of administrative arrangements currently underway.

Recommendation 6:

Retained and/or off duty wholtime staff should be utilised to cover for short-term unexpected absences (i.e. uncertified sickness). This may be by overtime, an agreed mixed crewing system, or the development of a 'bank' system.

Changes to Shift Duration

Many Services are changing the duration of the working shift. We have considered this as a method to improve efficiency in LFRS.

8 - hour shift

This is an option available that will reduce the actual time at work per shift. Conversely, the number of shifts per year will increase. Although the number of hours spent at work would effectively be the same as 42 per week, it is likely that there will be an increase in business continuity and permit additional time for CFS work. The existing 2.2.4 system requires an attendance of 182.5 shifts per year (excluding leave), whilst a 4 watch x 8-hour shift would require 273.75 attendance's (excluding leave). This would mean each member of staff would be required to attend an additional 91.25 occasions per year.

There is a difference of opinion in respect of leave allocation. The grey book describes leave in terms of 'days' absence. The allocation of 32/273 days in total would clearly have a different impact to the existing 32/182. We are of the view that in terms of annual leave allocation, the 8-hour option would show some efficiency increase.

Key point 8: A change to 8-hour shifts is a workable option that may improve business continuity. The allocation of leave will alter, thereby realising some efficiency gains. The option however maintains 'closed' watch working and is likely to be unpopular with staff.

12 hour shift

A change to 12 hour shift working would be minimal change from the existing and would maintain the existing 2.2.4 system. This change would bring the system to comply with the requirements of the Working Time Regulations. There is also a view that equalising work shifts will introduce some flexibility and more readily accommodate staff who wish to work permanent days or nights. Such an approach may assist those with primary care responsibilities, whilst maintaining all the features of the existing 2.2.4 system. This is likely to be a more popular option with staff, yet will not realise any efficiency gains. Some benefit will be gained by changing the start/finish times (see below), but in the wider context of financial pressures, these will be minimal.

Key point 9: A change to 12-hour shift working is a viable option.

Change Shift Start / Finish Times

It has been purported that start/finish times should match operational activity, the rationale for which is that changing shifts at times of heightened activity increase the potential for overtime.

Operational activity levels in LFRS over a three year period have been analysed. Operational activity levels rise steadily from approximately 0800 hours and peak around 2000 hours. Of these incidents it has not been possible to consider how many have attracted overtime payments. However it should be considered best practice to manage shift changes so as to minimise the potential of staff being required to work overtime.

What should also not be overlooked is the overall aim 'to make Lancashire a Safer Community' and the requirement to reduce deaths and injuries by increased firefighter involvement in community safety activities. Therefore, whilst every effort should be made to effect shift changes during periods of low operational activity, it should be ensured that the ability to carry out CFS work, particularly during the early evening, is not compromised. We are of the view that overall there is a case for changing shift start/finish times.

There are two approaches to consider the maximising of CFS opportunities. Start/finish times of 0600 and 1800 hours would present opportunity to utilise the day shift, whilst at the same time allow crews to change prior to any CFS activity planned for early evening. There would also be six positive hours before the 'rest period' from midnight³⁶ and, with a shift change at 0600 hours, there is an opportunity to increase early morning productivity³⁷. Alternatively, start/finish times of 0900 and 2100 would permit virtually all the CFS to be carried out by the day shift, leaving the night shift to carry out other station work. Commencing work at 0900 hours would be no change from the existing and by starting the night shift at 2100 hours, meal breaks could be reconfigured to maximise productive working prior to midnight. This latter option is more likely to achieve greater efficiency in relation to Community Fire Safety activity.

The opportunity therefore exists to change shift times, which would improve efficiency and meet the requirements of the Working Time Regulations.

Recommendation 7:

Shift start/finish times should change to maximise efficiency in relation to Community Fire Safety activity.

Changes to Work Routine

Some Services are reviewing the work routine with the aim of increasing productivity. Both the 8-hour and 12-hour options are seen by some as a method of increasing work output. Given that both these options maintain full 24-hour instant response on shift working stations, there is no change from the existing. It is therefore improbable that amending the work routine will realise meaningful efficiency increases. We are of the view that a structured and well-managed performance management framework is key to maximising productivity at times when crews are not dealing with operational incidents. In which case performance targets and outcomes become the productivity drivers.

Some Services have considered utilising the traditional 'stand down' time between midnight and 0700 hours, and Public Holiday working, all of which has been recently addressed in LFRS as per SOADMIN\80.

Overall we are of the view that under existing arrangements the wording of the Service Order provides sufficient flexibility for managers to exercise discretion in their obligation to meeting LFRS strategic objectives. Recent changes have altered the station work routine to work 'periods'. This has increased the time available for CFS work and should permit managers to develop within a performance management framework.

³⁶ Which would probably include a meal break.

³⁷ Staff will be starting work at 0600 hours; at present, the rest period finishes at 0700 hours. The time from 0700 to 0900 hours is at the end of a long shift and is often unproductive working time.

Key point 10:

The managerial approach has become more performance focused. The LFRS work routine has recently been amended to reflect this, and managers now have discretion in day to day management.

Systems Incorporating Annualised Hours (4 and 5 shift)

This is a popular option among some Brigades. We have considered whether such a system would be appropriate for LFRS and believe that the basis, upon which the annualised hours calculation is made, is flawed. There are widespread discrepancies in what constitutes the total number of annualised hours available to an authority, details of which are outlined below.

Annualised hours is a flexible system whereby employees' hours are totalled over a period, e.g. one-year. The main purpose of this approach is to permit employees to work more or less hours per week as agreed to meet peaks and troughs of the business. For the employer there is an advantage that some shifts may be allocated, with the remainder being held back and utilised at times of greatest need. The company may use these unallocated shifts to cover for absent colleagues or to cope with peak demand.³⁸

The principle of annualised hours has been used by some brigades to recalculate the commitment of staff conditioned to working the 42-hour shift system. There has been great debate as to how hours worked should be calculated and to date there are wide discrepancies. There are two crucial issues:

1. The interpretation of the annualised hours formula
2. The definition of a 'working week'

The interpretation of the annualised hours formula

"In some systems the employee is paid for unallocated shifts and 'owes' time to the company. The company holds these hours or 'payback' shifts in reserve and can ask employees to work them at short notice to cover for colleagues or cope with peak demand (ACAS)."

Brigades have considered the hours worked by 42-hour shift workers and, as a matter of controversial opinion, some are of the belief that staff are 'in debt' to the authority. The shortfall in hours is to be used to cover for sickness absence.

In justifying the shortfall in hours; brigades have used the 'ACAS typical' formula to calculate annual hours.

³⁸ Further details can be found in the ACAS Advisory Booklet – Changing Patterns of Work and NJC for Local Government Services; Finding the balance, Work-life policies in practice

Number of weeks per year - less annual leave and bank holidays - multiplied by the number of working hours per week = annualised hours

The example given is based on a 39-hour week and five weeks annual holiday:

Length of year		52.00 weeks
Deduct	(a) annual holidays	5.00 weeks
	(b) public holidays	1.60 weeks

Total working weeks = 45.4 x 39 hours per week
= 1770.6 annual hours

The application of this formula has been interpreted differently by brigades. It should also be noted that the 'Grey Book' defines leave in terms of days not weeks.

Below are two examples of applying annualised hours.

Example 1

In the 42 hours per week system 1986 hours are required per year, calculated in the following way:

Number of weeks in the year = 52.143

Minus weeks of leave per year (41 days – 7 lost to rota) = 4.85 weeks

Multiplied by 42 hours worked per week

$$(52.143 - 4.85) \times 42 = 1986 \text{ hours per year}$$

Applied to the new duty system (an average of 147 duty shifts worked per year), produces annual hours of 1764.

147 shifts x 12 hours = 1764 hours

If 1986 hours are required over the year and the duty system only produces 1764, then 222 hours per employee can be considered as 'banked hours'.

222 banked hours amount to 18 'banked shifts' at an average of 12 hours per shift.

As a consequence each individual 'owes' 18 days to the authority.³⁹

³⁹ Information received indicates that this proposal has now been withdrawn by the respective Service

Example 2

183 shifts per year available for work

Firefighter salary = £25k

52.14 weeks per year

One week = 7 days

A firefighter is paid for an average of 42 hours per week

38 days annual leave entitlement

Rates of pay; 52.14 weeks x 42 hours = 2189.88

£25k / 2189.88 = £11.42 per hour

Anytime off from the 183 possible shifts is paid leave.

To calculate annualised hours

38 shifts / 7 days	=	5.43 weeks
52.14 – 5.43	=	46.71 weeks
46.71 x 42 hrs per week	=	1961.82
1961.82 / 12 hour shift	=	163.48
163.48 – 155 shifts worked	=	8.48 shifts

As a consequence each individual 'owes' 8.48 shifts to the authority.

As can be seen from the above examples there is a wide difference in the application of the formula. The review has considered whether the annualised hours approach would meet the needs of LFRS.

The principle of annualised hours is for the employer to agree with the employee beforehand what the commitment will be. As can be seen from the two previous examples, the approach of some fire services has been to apply a mathematical formula that identifies a shortfall in hours. Understandably this has not found favour with employees.⁴⁰

We believe the application of the formula to the 42-hour shift system in LFRS would be as follows:

Annual hours available for work per person:

52.143 (total weeks per year) x 42 (hrs worked per week) = 2190

Annual shifts available for work per person = 182.5

Average shift duration is 12 hour per shift

Excluding absence each person would work 2190 hrs per year.

⁴⁰ Following the publication of various schemes, there has been significant adverse reaction expressed on fire related websites.

Absences (LFRS interpretation of Grey Book entitlement)

Annual leave = 24 shifts per year (slight variation depending on role and length of service to be taken at times when staff would otherwise be at work, i.e. excludes⁴¹ rota days)

Public Holiday = 8 per year

Total leave absence = 32 shifts per year

Total annual hours absence: 32 x 12 = 384 (actual work hours)

Therefore in total

Calculate shifts	Annualised hours
Total shifts available per year = 182.5	182.5 x 12 = 2190
Total leave absence per year = 32	32 x 12 = 384
Shifts available for work = 150.5	150.5 x 12 = 1806

Definition of 'working week'

ACAS guidance refers to the allocation of leave by 'weeks'. In seeking to apply the formula, some brigades have adopted the same approach. This has highlighted one crucial issue of interpretation, the definition of a 'working week'. We believe this approach is one factor in the wide variation in calculating the annualised hours.

Government guidance to the Working Time Regulations states:

*A week's leave should allow workers to be away from work for a week. It should be the same amount of time as the working week: if a worker does a 5-day week, he or she is entitled to 20 days' leave; if he or she does a 3-day week, the entitlement is 12 days' leave.*⁴²

One view expressed has been to consider the fire and rescue service as a 7-day week organisation. Whilst we agree this to be correct in terms of service delivery, this is not the case in respect of employee's commitment to work. No duty system requires 7 days continuous working and to consider such a system would conflict with the Grey Book.⁴³ Given that the 2.2.4 shift system is effectively 4 periods of duty followed by 4 periods of rota leave (4/8), we are of the view that the correct application of DTI guidance in terms of shift working should be to consider the present working week over 3.5/7 days duration.

In the process of reviewing shift systems, some Services have highlighted the fact that the fire and rescue service have annual leave allocated which is in excess of the four weeks legal minimum. We consider that the Grey Book

⁴¹ This principle has recently been agreed with the FBU and incorporated into SO\ADMIN\50.

⁴² DTI Guidance to the Working Time Regulations 1998, section 7.

⁴³ Section 4, part A paragraph 7(3) states: "There shall be at least two complete periods of twenty-four hours free from duty each week". This is repeated in paragraph 3, which completely precludes any form of 7-day working.

entitlement to leave,⁴⁴ as interpreted by collective agreement between management and the FBU, to be correct for LFRS. We have therefore dismissed any comparison to the legal minimum as irrelevant.

In conclusion, we are of the view that, whilst the annualised hours system may be a useful system of working to meet an identified need and enhance the facility for flexible working, we are of the view that the system currently worked in LFRS does not amount to a shortfall in staff hours. Therefore staff are not 'in debt' to the authority.

Recommendation 8:

LFRS should not make a wholesale change to an annualised hours system. The facility is an option for staff seeking to work flexible hours as per SOADMIN50 section 28.17.

Flexible Crewing Options

We believe the right way forward for LFRS is to provide fire cover that relates to risk. Due to the wide geographic variation across Lancashire, the population and diversity of risk, we are of the view that the way forward is to move away from the current 'one size fits all' approach. The IRMP project relating to the Emergency Cover Review modelling will provide a clearer direction in respect of risk profiling. Therefore outlined below are a suite of options that may be considered.

Local Management of Staff

In general we believe that the local management of staff can achieve maximum efficiency and total flexibility. This would be complete departure from the existing approach and may be viewed by some as a radical option. The basic concept is that a station manager is responsible for providing the requisite staffing within an allocated budget. Introducing such a system would require considerable logistics, but once established would be relatively straightforward to operate.

The advantages of this approach

- Local management of staff
- No detachments as shortfalls could be covered from within
- The number of staff on duty could be variable to meet Service needs
- Total flexibility in hours worked to suit staff and Service
- Staff paid according to hours worked up to full time work (42 hours per week)
- Independent station management
- Opportunities for overtime working.

⁴⁴ Part C – Leave paragraph 2.

It is recognised that this would require a fundamental change to our operating system. As a consequence, managers would initially require guidance and training in financial management. Whilst this would require some effort in the early stages, we believe this to be the right way forward for LFRS and should be a long-term aim.

Recommendation 9:

Local management of staff should be the long-term aim. Station managers should be empowered to manage staff within agreed guidelines.

The Use of a 'Strategic Reserve'

One Service is in the process of introducing this option. The basic principle is that a number of pumps will not be immediately available. Crews are utilised for CFS work and to carry out necessary training during the day up to 20.00 hours and then released from duty at night. Whilst on duty crews will be available to attend operational incidents as a 'strategic reserve', the recall time being 60 minutes.⁴⁵ Prior to introducing this system a full analysis was carried out to match operational incidents with the number of available fire appliances. Research data revealed an over provision of pumps at night, the crews from which have been effectively moved onto day duties.

In practice staff are committed to 6 tours of 2.2.4 working, followed by 6 x 8-hour early shifts or 6 x 8-hour late shifts as appropriate.

There are a number of advantages to this system:

- Increased staff working day duty introduces greater flexibility and thereby increases options for flexible working.
- More staff are on duty at time when CFS work can be carried out.
- A more effective use of staff in that pumps rarely used at night can be redeployed to carry out effective work during the day.
- If introduced on 2-pump stations, a 24-hour instant response is maintained.
- The rota system naturally rotates staff, thereby maintaining operational skills.
- Operational staff are available during the day to deal with incidences of high and extreme operational demand.
- The 2.2.4 system is maintained and supplemented by two day shifts.

⁴⁵ LFRS have operated a similar system for a number of years, albeit to a lesser extent, when carrying out centralised training. Three pumps from across the Service have been sent to Service Training Centre, during which time they have been available on a delayed turnout. These pumps have returned to full availability at night time.

However, the following points should also be noted:

- The redeployment of staff is effectively a reduction in night time fire cover. Such a move should only occur following an impact risk analysis.
- The question is likely to arise that if pumps are not required at night and if the strategic reserve is not utilised for incidents by day, whether the 'strategic reserve' pumps are required at all.
- The Service in question is compact in geographic area and well provided for by stations having 2 pumps staffed 24 hours. In such circumstances there is greater scope for redeployment.
- By comparison LFRS has a large geographic area with six x 2-pump stations. Therefore the impact of such a change is potentially greater.
- To introduce this system on a 1 pump station would effectively remove the 24-hour instant response from each station affected.

The Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) met to consider this system on 14 June 2005.⁴⁶ At the time of writing both parties were considering recommendations based around a base shift pattern of 11-hour day (0700 to 1800) and a 13-hour night (1800 to 0700)⁴⁷. The Strategic Reserve pattern is as outlined above.

Whilst the recommendations of TAP are not binding, it is likely that the outcome of this case will influence the decision making process of other Services.

Key point 11: The 'strategic reserve' may be a realistic option for selected stations in LFRS. Prior to any change consideration should be given to the potential impact on the Lancashire risk profile.

Change from 42-hour shift, to 42-hour day cover with retained night cover

This option is to be introduced by one Service in an area where there is relatively low operational activity. Stations may be grouped together to provide day cover, with night cover being provided by wholetime firefighters and have separate retained contracts to cover nights and weekends. Alternatively firefighters may be employed on retained contracts only to cover nights and weekends.

⁴⁶ See Circular NJC/07/05

⁴⁷ The apparent rationale for these times is to make the shift system comply with the Working Time Regulations.

The option has merit in that staff conditioned to 42-hour working are available for CFS at times when most needed by the community. To accord with the operational profile, an instant response is available at times of greatest operational activity.

This option has attraction in terms of efficiency gains, in that four watches can be replaced by two.

Key point 12: Changing from 2.2.4 to a rota that provides an instant daytime response will realise efficiencies in terms of staff numbers. This may be an appropriate duty system for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

Local Management - Pairing or Grouping of Stations

Stations can be grouped together for staffing purposes. To ensure maximum efficiency the principle of mixed crewing could be developed so that staff working the retained duty system may support a core of staff working the wholetime duty system. This option is particularly attractive in areas where there are a high number of retained stations relative to wholetime.

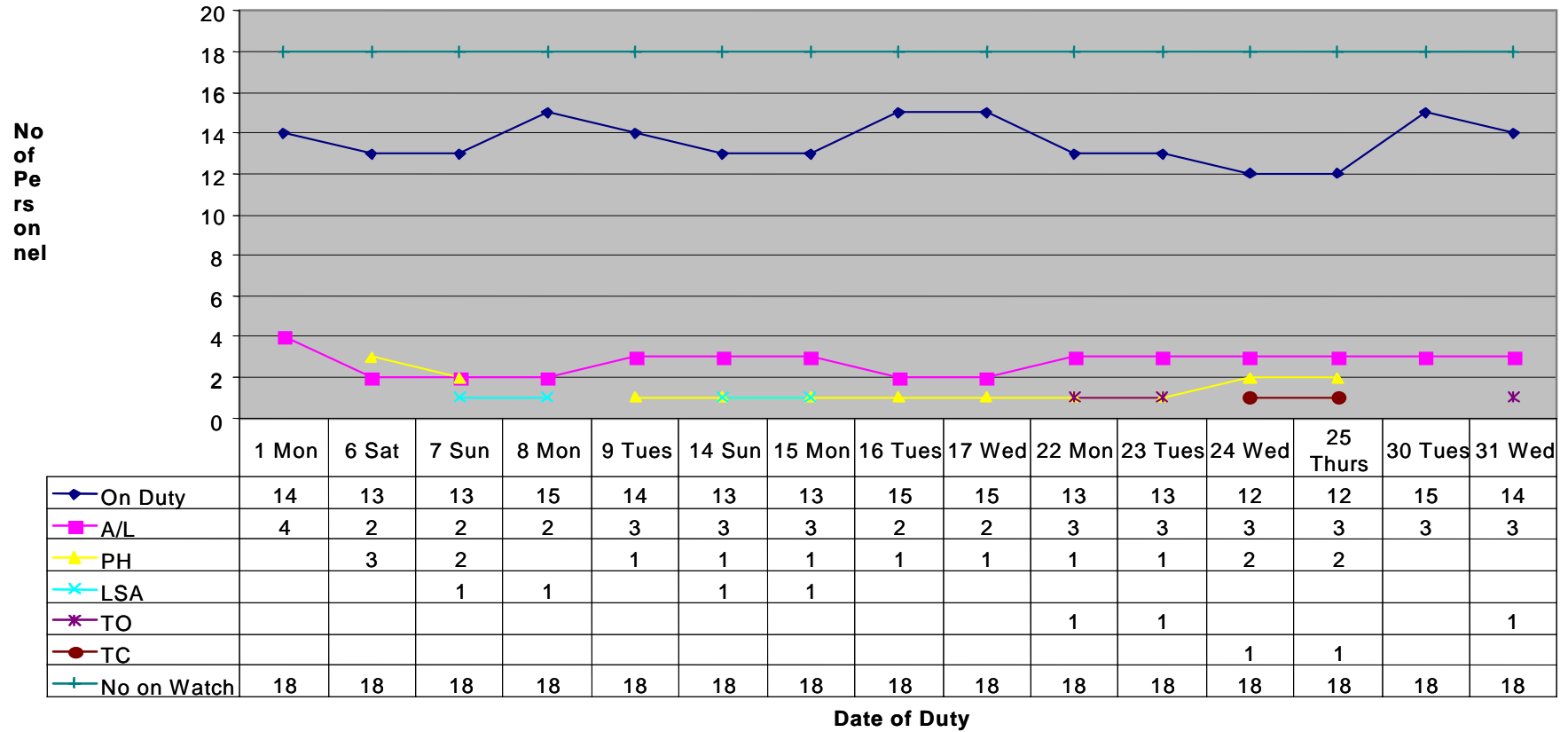
The pool of wholetime and retained staff are employed at one or more stations at the discretion of local management. Wholetime staff may be paid a supplement to provide additional retained cover. Local management arrangements will ensure that 24/7 cover is maintained.

This option will enhance mixed crewing and encourage non-standard work patterns agreed on a local basis.

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LEAVE IN EXCESS OF SERVICE ORDERS



Appendix 2

Providing Operational Availability Via a 'Banked' System

The use of 'bank' staff is a long established method used in the health service to provide short term cover. The precise details of operation vary between Primary Care Trusts and by way of example may be similar to the following:

- To cover for unexpected absences where cover is essential
- To cover for known absences, where for clear and demonstrable reasons, it is not possible to cover through a change to the duty roster.
- To provide essential cover in exceptional circumstances.
- To cover vacancies on a temporary basis.
- Employment is on a day to day basis with staff being paid at the agreed rate for the hours worked.
- Staff may be required to contact a nominated work manager at an agreed time during the week preceding to give details of availability for the forthcoming week.
- Staff may agree to provide specific hours of availability over a period of time.
- There is no payment for occupational sickness or holidays.

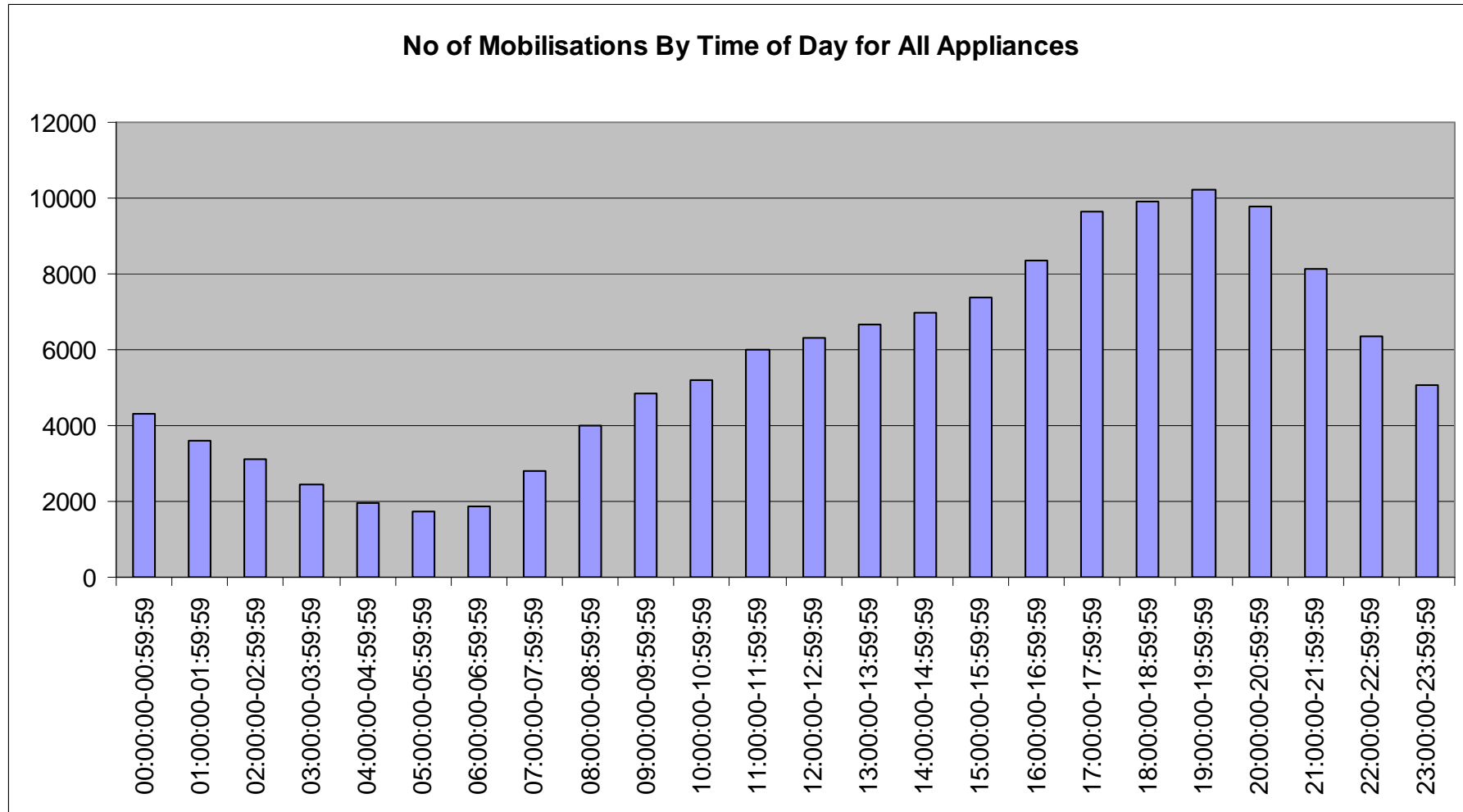
We are of the view that such a system may be adapted to cover for short term absences in LFRS. It is anticipated that once developed, the system would be promulgated for staff to apply and as a consequence, a register 'bank' personnel compiled. Subject to statutory compliance there should be no restriction placed on staff, either wholtime or retained, wishing to avail themselves of work. Also, given that vacancies will arise on wholtime or key retained stations, staff may wish to travel to various workplaces.

For the employer the system has the advantage of making best use of staff at times of greatest need. Conversely, the employee offers times/dates which are best suited to themselves, which we feel would be ideal for those seeking to work part-time or with primary care responsibilities.

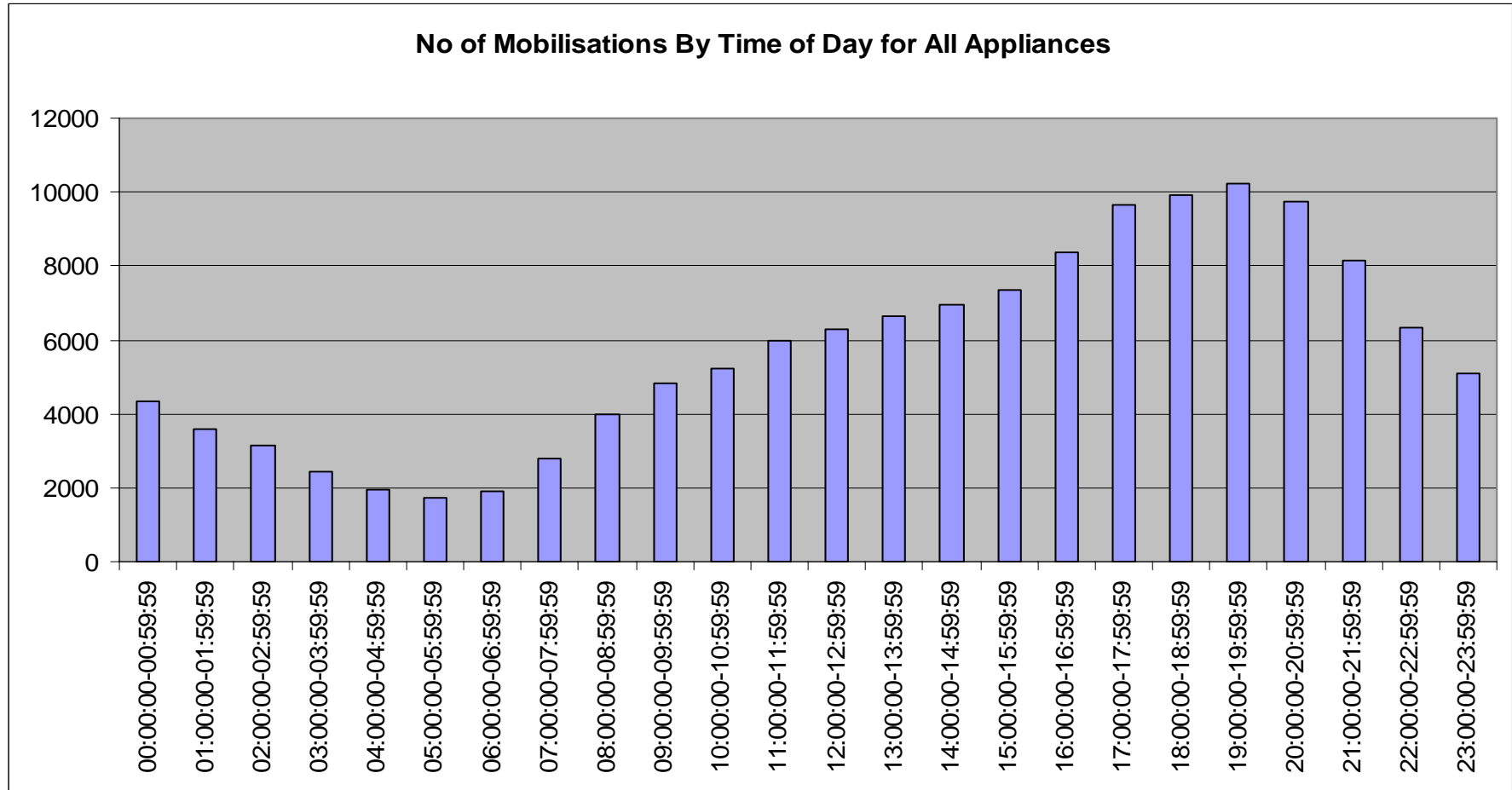
Staff working the bank system would be eligible to hourly rate, which would realise a 50% saving on the alternative cost of paying over-time.

The system could be used initially to cover for sickness or other short-term unexpected absences. However we believe in the longer term, with careful planning and good management, the principle could be extended to provide cover for other absences. The overall effect will be to reduce the 1.39 ridership factor and thereby realise significant financial savings.

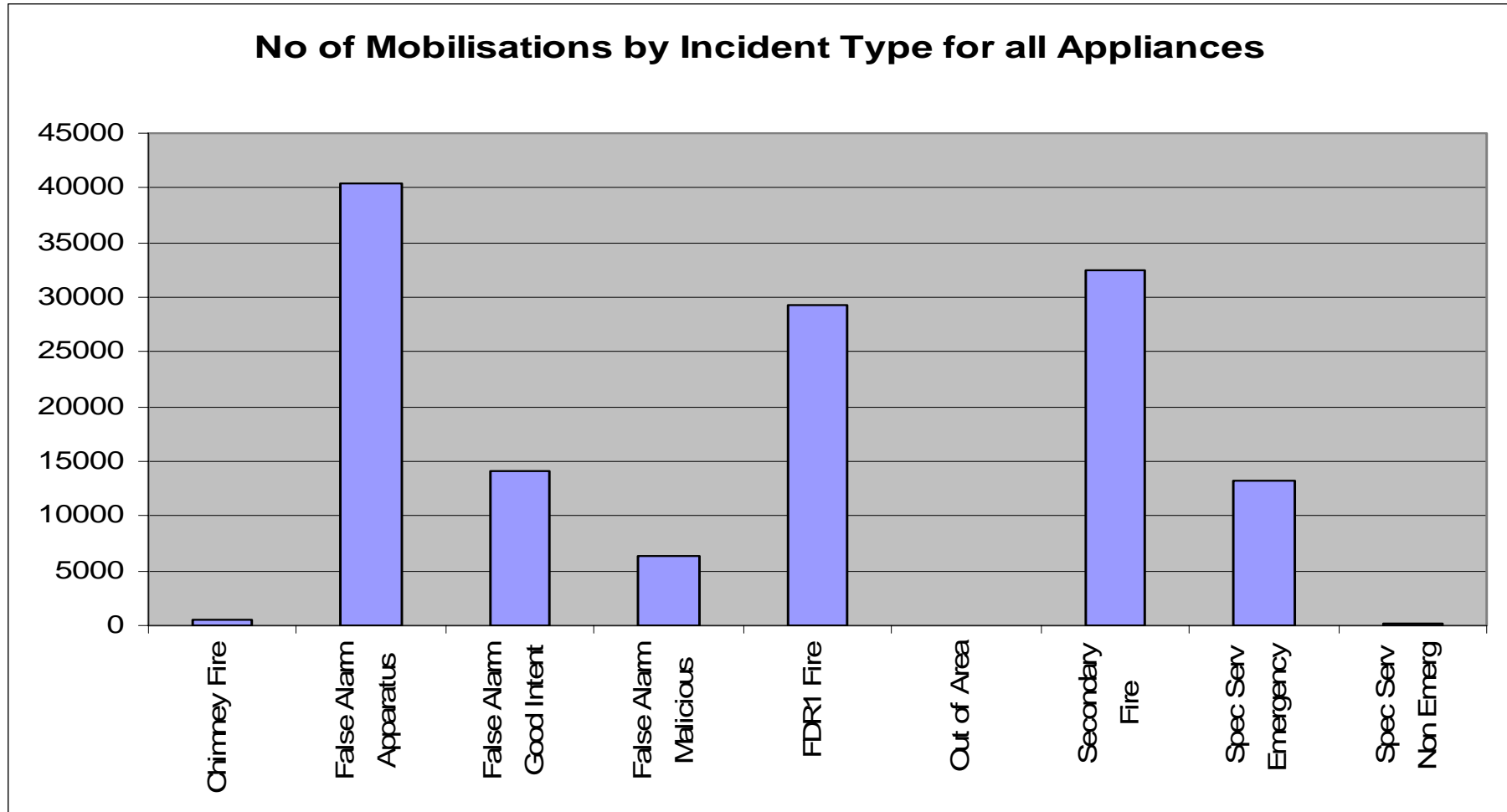
Appendix 3



Appendix 4



Appendix 5



Appendix 6

SO\ADM\80

Issued 04/99

3.7.2 42 HOUR DUTY SYSTEM

DAY SHIFT

0900	-	0930 hours	Change of shift followed by Watch briefing and Appliance and Equipment checks
0930	-	1230 hours	Work period (to include 15 minute break)
1230	-	1330 hours	Meal break (may be moved according to work requirements although lunchtime meal break should be taken between 1200 – 1400 hours unless it is not possible to do so due to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances)
1330	-	1700 hours	Work period (to include 15 minute break)
1700	-	1725 hours	Fitness Training
1725	-	1755 hours	Meal break

NIGHT SHIFT

1800	-	1830 hours	Change of shift followed by Watch Briefing and Appliance and Equipment Checks
1830	-	2100 hours	Work period
2100	-	2200 hours	Meal break (may be moved according to work requirements)
2200	-	Midnight	Work period
Midnight	-	0700 hours	Rest period, other than on those occasions where there is a requirement to respond to emergency calls, perform work arising from emergency calls or perform other essential activities that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Arise from the Integrated Risk Management Plan▪ Are within individual's role and responsibilities▪ Are appropriate during these hours
0700	-	0800 hours	Work period
0800	-	0825 hours	Fitness Training
0825	-	0855 hours	Meal break