

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Mandatory Overtime 2017

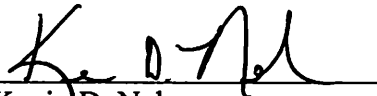
The following constitutes an agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration (Agency) and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), AFL-CIO, National VA Council #53 (NVAC). The purpose of this agreement is to address the urgent need to reduce the pending disability claims backlog by utilizing Veterans Service Representatives, Rating Veterans Service Representatives Decision Review Officers, Quality Review Specialist Claims Assistants and File Clerks. Any expansion of mandatory overtime beyond the positions listed above will be communicated to AFGE timely, prior to expansion.

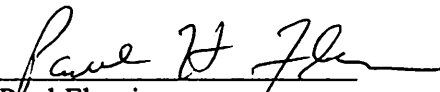
1. The mandatory overtime is designed to meet emergent needs. This agreement is in effect for all mandatory overtime scheduled through the end of FY2017, which ends on September 30, 2017. Should management want to extend or re-implement mandatory OT beyond FY 2017, the union will be informed and the parties will revisit this MOU.
2. Management will be flexible in providing an optimum range of available hours, to include, but not limited to, expanded office hours to assist employees in choosing the dates they are able to work to meet the required overtime hours. When practicable, and provided mandatory overtime funding is available, management will inform employees of available mandatory overtime hours on a monthly basis. When employees select the day(s) to work, the minimum amount of overtime that can be worked must be in increments of one (1) hour on weekdays, and two (2) hours on weekends or compressed days. From Monday through Friday, overtime hours must be worked before or after the employee's tour of duty during the hours between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., unless office hours are expanded.
3. Management will take into consideration employees' requests to work compensatory time in lieu of premium pay as covered by Article 21 of the Master Agreement.
4. Management will adhere to the provisions of Article 35 regarding leave when making mandatory overtime decisions.
5. Mandatory overtime shall not be in excess of 20 hours per month per employee
6. If an employee wants to work more than the mandated overtime hours, then the employee may request to do so. If management does not grant the request, the employee should be provided an explanation so the employee may understand what the basis for the denial is. If the employee wants the denial in writing, the employee must provide a written request for voluntary overtime, in excess of that mandated at the facility.

7. Employees shall be premium pay in addition to the overtime compensation in accordance with applicable regulations. Employees on compressed schedules who request to work more than 10 hour days will be permitted to do so provided the Regional Office hours of operation can accommodate the request. Otherwise, employees may work on their compressed day, during the hours from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
8. After working mandatory overtime for two (2) consecutive months, employees may request two 'flex' weeks in which they do not have to work overtime to accommodate family, vacation, etc. These flex weeks will be available for the employee to use until the end of FY 2017. This will be managed in accordance with valid operational needs. The employee's monthly overtime requirement will be prorated accordingly when this 'flex' period is utilized. All previously scheduled leave will also be honored, even if the employee hasn't worked two consecutive months of mandatory overtime.
9. All leave requests submitted after mandatory overtime begins will be treated in accordance with the Master Agreement.
10. On a case by case basis, management will review employees' requests to be excused from mandatory overtime for hardship reasons. Examples of hardships may include factors such as transportation limitations, biopsychosocial problems, educational commitments, family needs, and medical conditions. Employees will request hardship waivers in writing, and responses from management will be returned in writing and include reasons for any denial, provided the employee states their reason(s) in writing. When a hardship request is denied, employees will be informed of their right to seek union representation. Upon request, the local union will be provided with the number of and reason(s) for denials.
11. Medical certification required to support exclusion from mandatory overtime based on any hardship request, will be limited to medical documentation from the employee's medical provider stating that the employee is unable to participate in mandatory overtime. However, nothing in this provision will conflict with the statutory obligation to conform to the reasonable accommodation process. If the exclusion is for a medical condition, renewal will be annually or prior to expiration of the period covered by the medical documentation.
12. If an employee previously signed up for mandatory overtime and is prohibited from working due to an unscheduled office decision, e.g., office closure, power outage, etc., then management agrees to deduct the same number of hours from the mandatory requirement. In the event an employee desires to make up these mandatory hours, management will be flexible in providing make-up opportunities.
13. All employees on Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) are excluded from this policy.
14. Employees on official travel or extended leave will have their required mandatory overtime requirement prorated as follows: for the month in which the employee is on official travel or extended leave, the employee's mandatory overtime requirement will be

reduced by one hour for each work day on official travel or extended leave. Mitigating circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis.

15. Management will not hold employees accountable for factors or extenuating circumstances which affect performance that are beyond the employees' control in compliance with Article 27.
16. In accordance with Article 47 of the Master Agreement, Local bargaining shall take place at individual facilities once this agreement is signed and may include substantive bargaining that does not conflict with negotiated national policy and agreements.
17. If after implementation either party is made aware of issues that may adversely affect employees, both parties agree to discuss the issues and work to mutually resolve the issues for the employees. Should discussions not resolve the issues; the parties will implement the negotiating process.
18. Management shall provide a copy of this MOU to the local president and/or designee at each AFGE local within 10 days of the date this MOU is signed.


Kevin D. Nelson
for the Agency


Paul Fleming
for AFGE/NVAC

04/06/17
Date