

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Mandatory Overtime FY 2024

The following constitutes an agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration (Agency or Management) and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), AFL-CIO, National VA Council #53 (NVAC). The purpose of this agreement is to address the emergent needs to improve delivery of benefits decisions by VBA employees.

1. Mandatory overtime is designed to meet emergent needs. This agreement is in effect for all mandatory overtime scheduled through the end of FY 2024, in all operational divisions of VBA. Should Management want to extend or re-implement mandatory OT beyond FY 2024, Management will request renewal, and the appropriate accommodations outlined in this MOU will be followed for any mandatory overtime requirements on an interim basis, until a new MOU is signed.
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 the Master Agreement.
4. Management will adhere to the provisions of the Master Agreement regarding leave when making mandatory overtime decisions.
5. An employee may request to work more than the mandatory overtime limit. If Management does not grant this request, the employee will be provided with the basis for the denial. The denial basis should be provided in writing if the employee makes the request in writing.
6. Employees shall receive premium pay 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 office's hours of operation can accommodate the request. Otherwise, employees may work on their compressed day, during the local hours of operation.

7. Employees may request four '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 2024. This will be managed in accordance with valid operational needs. The employee's monthly overtime requirement will be prorated accordingly when 'flex' week(s) are utilized. All leave will be honored in accordance with the Master Agreement.
8. If an employee is assigned overtime work for which no credit is applicable in the employee's performance standard, excluded time will be used.
9. Local Management will provide employees with notice as early as possible, prior to cancelling mandatory overtime.
10. All leave requests submitted after mandatory overtime begins will be treated in accordance with the Master Agreement.
11. On a case-by-case basis, Management will review employee 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, the employee 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.
12. 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.
13. 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, or a scheduled closure such as scheduled IT outage, or any other reason, Management will 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.
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 workday on official travel or extended leave. Mitigating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

15. Management will notify employees of mandatory overtime requirements as soon as possible. If notification is after the first of the month, Management will pro-rate the number of hours required based on the number of workdays remaining in the month.
16. Management will not hold an employee accountable for factors or extenuating circumstances that affect performance and are beyond the employee's control.
17. Consistent with the procedures set forth in the Master Agreement, local bargaining may take place at individual facilities and may include substantive bargaining that does not conflict with negotiated national policy and agreements.
18. After implementation, if 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 to the extent required by statute.
19. Management shall provide a copy of this MOU to the local president and/or designee at each location within (10) ten days of the date this MOU is signed.

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for the Agency

Paul H. Fleming
for AFGE/NVAC

Date