

Standby Service and Call-Out Duty Policy

Original Implementation Date:

Approved by:

Date of Last Revision: July 2, 2025

Approved by: Cathie O'Toole, CAO

Effective Date of Last Revision: July 2, 2025

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1 – Policy Name

Standby Service and Call-Out Duty Policy

2 – Purpose

The Municipality acknowledges that there may be times when it is appropriate or necessary to assign employees to standby service or call-out duty to ensure that service delivery is maintained and/or respond to urgent situations. In such cases, employees assigned to standby service must be appropriately compensated and service requirements must be in compliance with the *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code*.

3 – Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are:

- To ensure business units develop fair compensation practices for employees on standby service and call-out duty
- To support consistent application of standby service and call-out duty procedures.
- To assist business units in managing labour costs
- To treat employees in a fair and equitable manner

4 – Scope

This applies to all regular and temporary non-union employees.

5 – Definitions

In the context of this document:

Standby Service means the assignment of an employee for a specific time frame to ensure availability to meet operational requirements outside of their regular working hours.

Standby Pay means compensation paid to an employee who has completed standby service as defined in this Policy.

Call-out Duty means a situation where an employee has been called back to work before their next scheduled shift. If the extra work happens immediately before or after their normal shift, it counts as overtime instead—not call-out duty.

Call-out Pay means compensation paid to an employee who has completed call-out duty as

defined in this Policy.

Standard Work Week means the employee's regularly scheduled working time. For most non-union employees, this is 70 or 80 hours bi-weekly (35 or 40 hours weekly, respectively).

Base Salary is the standard salary an employee receives for their work, excluding any additional compensation such as bonuses, benefits, or overtime.

Time Off in Lieu means the paid time off that employees use once they have banked overtime.

Overtime refers to all authorized hours worked in excess of regular hours of work, including authorized travel time. Travel time does not include time spent travelling to and from an employee's residence and normal place of work (or other work location when overtime is continuous with regular hours of work). Overtime is different from *Standby Service and Call-Out Duty* because given overtime is generally non-recurring nature.

6 – Roles and Responsibilities

Chief, Human Resources

The Chief, Human Resources is responsible for:

- Approving exceptions to the Policy as recommended by the business unit.

Human Resources, Total Rewards

Human Resources, Total Rewards is responsible for:

- Reviewing all business unit Standby Service and Call-Out Duty programs.
- Ensuring interpretation of and compliance with the procedures outlined in this Policy, related policies and legislation at creation of the program.
- Approving all new and updates to existing compensation structures related to this Policy.

Human Resources Business Partner

Human Resources Business Partner is responsible for:

- Supporting leaders to resolve conflicts/issues arising with respect to standby service and call-out duty.
- Ensuring appropriate interpretation of and compliance with the procedures outlined in this Policy, related policies and legislation.
- Supporting business units in developing and monitoring standby and call-out compensation as appropriate.

Chiefs/Executive Directors

The Chiefs/Executive Directors are responsible for:

- Making recommendations to the Chief, Human Resources for any exception to the policy.
- Approving the use of standby service schedules as a practice within the business unit or specific divisions.
- Ensuring proper administration of this Policy and delegating approval authority to directors/managers/supervisors as appropriate.

- Developing an appropriate compensation structure to reflect operational requirements and reviewing and amending the compensation structure as needed.

Directors, Managers and Supervisors

Directors, managers and supervisors, with delegated authority from the Chief or Executive Director are responsible for:

- Preparing standby lists appropriate to the department needs, notifying employees of the standby rotation and posting lists as necessary.
- Ensuring effective and efficient use of other municipal practices/policies regarding hours of work to maximize staff resources.
- Ensuring fair and appropriate distribution of standby service among qualified employees where appropriate.
- Assigning employees as necessary for standby service to respond to urgent situations.
- Advising employees of any changes to the standby list, approving exchanges of standby duties, and scheduling coverage in cases of illness, as appropriate.
- Establishing reasonable response times with respect to a call-out duty.
- Ensuring the proper enforcement of municipal policies which may prevent an employee from accepting call-out duty or standby service, particularly the Substance Misuse Prevention Policy.
- Maintaining documentation and records relevant to departmental standby needs.
- Ensuring that payroll documentation properly records an employee's standby and/or callout service.
- In the case of Supervisors, securing prior approval from their Director/Manager for scheduled standby service.

Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring they are aware of their standby schedule, and that they are available to respond to a call-out within a reasonable time as established by their director, manager, or supervisor.
- Ensuring that they are always accessible and able to respond to a call-out when assigned to standby service.
- Finding a replacement, obtaining approval of their immediate supervisor and ensuring that standby coverage is maintained when:
 - the standby service schedule falls during the employee's vacation.
 - the employee exchanges their scheduled standby service.
- Complying with all municipal policies, particularly in relation to the Substance Misuse Prevention Policy, ensuring they report 'fit for work'.

7 – Policy Regulations

- A. Where individual business units require employees to be on a formal standby service or call-out duty arrangement, Executive Directors or Chief's will:

- I. Develop an appropriate compensation structure to reflect operational requirements. This may include supplementary compensation, time in lieu, or a base salary designed to reflect the stand-by requirement.
 - II. Review and amend the compensation structure as appropriate.
 - III. Seek review and approval from Human Resources, Total Rewards for any new and/or updates to existing to the compensation structure.
- B. All compensation structures related to this Policy must be approved by the Director Total Rewards, Human Resources.
- C. Employees assigned to standby service or call-out duty must be:
 - I. Accessible by determined communications channels (e.g., telephone, email, etc.)
 - II. Able to report/respond to work within a reasonable and acceptable time as established by the business unit director/manager/supervisor
- D. Employees will be compensated for a minimum of two (2) hours if called to work before their next scheduled shift.
- E. Employees who are called to work within two (2) hours of the start time of their regular shift, will be required to work continuously to the start of their regular shift.
 - I. Managers/supervisors, in their sole and absolute discretion, may provide employees called in, in advance of the start of their regular shift, with a break from work. This break will be paid at the call-out duty rate, and such break will be considered part of the continuous call-out work.
 - II. Employees without specifically assigned work during this period are expected to report to the performance of their regular duties, and if unable to find available work are considered on paid break (at the applicable call-out rate).

8 – Repeal

N/A

9 – Effective Date

July 2, 2025

10 – Related Policies and Practices

Overtime Policy

Substance Misuse Prevention Policy

11 – Policy Review

Review every 2 years.

12 – Contact

Human Resources Business Partner

13 – Attachments

Nova Scotia Labour Standards - <https://novascotia.ca/lae/employmentrights/>