



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



National Ambulance Service (NAS)

Workforce Support Guideline

Appropriate and Effective Utilisation of Post Graduate Paramedic Interns

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1.0 POLICY

- 1.1 It is the policy of the National Ambulance Service (NAS) to provide Managers, Supervisors and Staff with clear and unambiguous operational guidelines.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 To ensure that any deployment of Post Graduate Paramedic Interns is congruent with their educational objectives
- 2.2 To ensure the quality of patient care is safe and effective
- 2.3 To ensure the full utilisation of staff to accommodate the demands of the Service and thereby reduce/eliminate service interruption to patients/clients.
- 2.4 To provide Post Graduate Paramedic Intern staff with a fair, equitable and transparent approach to rostering arrangements

3.0 SCOPE

- 3.1 This Guideline applies to NAS Post Graduate Paramedic Interns only.

4.1 LEGISLATION/OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- A. PHECC Training and Education Standards
- B. Organisation of Working Time Act 1997
- C. Part Time (Fixed Term) Work Act 2003
- D. HSE Staff Grievance Procedure
- E. Financial Regulation 2009 NFR-O3 Payroll
- F. Financial Regulation 2009 NFR-OS Travel & Subsistence

5.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- S.1 Post Graduate Intern (Intern) - A Student Paramedic, employed on a Specific Purpose Contract of Employment, who has successfully discharged the National Qualification in Emergency Medical Technology Examination and whom is now available for operational deployment with a view to securing appropriate clinical and operational practice in line with the objectives of the Paramedic Programme
- S.2 Unrostered - An unrostered member of staff is defined as any member of staff who is not permanently assigned to a roster.
- S.3 Minimum notice of rosters - The Organisation of Working Time Act defines minimum notice of rosters as twenty-four hours in advance of the first working day of that week (Section 17, Subsection 2, 3).

S.4 Short Notice Changes to Rosters - The Organisation of Working Time Act defines short notice changes as changes to working hours, notified within twenty four hours of the notified starting time (Section 17, Subsection 4). Such changes are permissible only in exceptional circumstances where such circumstances are unforeseen by the employer, i.e. short notice sick leave, force majeure leave, compassionate/bereavement leave, paternity leave, staff injury, Stress Management stand down, critical staff shortage or Major Emergency.

6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Each Senior Manager will ensure that each Manager, Supervisor and Staff member is aware of and understands this Guideline.

6.2 It is the responsibility of each Manager, Supervisor and Staff member to adhere to this Guideline.

6.3 It is the responsibility of the relevant Manager to implement and support this Guideline and to supervise the operation of this Guideline.

7.1 GUIDELINE

7.2 ASSIGNMENT OF UNROSTERED DUTIES

7.2.1 Initially Paramedic Interns are assigned to NAS Area of Operations. This in practice requires a Paramedic Intern to work and train in a number of Stations. Structured annual leave arrangements facilitate the long-term planning of duties for the majority of unrostered staff and facilitates the targeted placements of Paramedic interns.

7.2.2 Where a Paramedic Intern is assigned shifts across a number of Stations, then no expenses are payable.

7.2.3 Where a Paramedic Intern commences their shift at a particular Station, then that Station becomes their base on that day. Subsistence while away from that base on that day only may be appropriate, subject to the criteria set out in Subsistence Regulations and claimed in compliance with National Financial Regulations (Section 4)

7.2.4 Where no vacant shifts exist on Stations, Paramedic Interns will be rostered over a 4 week period, subject to the limitations set out in Section 7.4, as additional crews or in exceptional circumstances, will, subject to approval by an Operations Resource Manager, provide release of staff for training, meetings, vehicle cleaning, etc. This also subject to limitations set out in 7.2.4

7.1.5 Where Interns are utilised as additional crews, they will be rotated throughout the Area of Operations to respond to peaks in demand or cover for short notice staff absence.

7.1.6 Whether additional crews are available or not, short notice staff absence will not be covered unless deemed essential by Ambulance Control or an Operations Resource Manager. This decision will be based on crew availability versus actual activity demand and remains a management responsibility and decision.

7.2 NOTIFICATION OF UNROSTERED DUTIES

7.2.1 Completed Rotas will be determined solely by and distributed by the relevant Paramedic Supervisor responsible for rosters.

7.2.2 The Paramedic Supervisor will ensure that the shifts allocated to the Interns are distributed at Station level

7.2.3 Paramedic Supervisors will plan working hours for Interns over an average 1S6 hours period, i.e. average 39 hours per week over 4 weeks. Every effort should be made, subject to the exigencies of the service and requests for leave, to spread working hours evenly over the four week period in so far as possible.

7.2.4 Weekly work assignments will be notified to Interns, in normal circumstances, within forty-eight hours of the first assigned working day of the coming week.

7.2.5 Minimum notice is twenty-four hours of the first assigned working day of the coming week. Minimum notice should be the exception rather than the norm (see Section S.3).

7.2.6 Weekly work assignments will include a minimum of two consecutive designated off duty days. Interns who wish to request a specific day off MUST notify the Paramedic Supervisor, responsible for rostering, NO LATER than 12.00 hours on the first working day of the week preceding the requirement. The Paramedic Supervisor will make every effort to accommodate, subject to operational demands. Paramedic Supervisors should ensure that the allocation of days off is evenly spread and reflects the volume of relief cover required so as to ensure there is no requirement to utilise off duty staff.

7.2.7 The Paramedic Supervisor will notify the Intern at the earliest opportunity, should their shifts change from those previously published (minimum notice - see Section S.3).

7.2.8 It remains the staff member's responsibility to contact the duty Station Supervisor, responsible for rostering, directly, to ascertain their forthcoming shift pattern.

7.3 SHORT NOTICE CHANGES TOROSTERS

- 7.3.1 Where due to an unforeseen event (see Sections S.4), and rostering arrangements require change at short notice, Interns will have their shift pattern changed across the previously notified working days. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the Interns allocated off duty days. This notification takes into account provisions set out in 7.2.S / 7.2.6, and such short notice requests that require a change of Base/Station will attract subsistence payment only if the Paramedic Supervisor is satisfied that it is consistent with National Financial Regulations NFR-OS(Travel and Subsistence)and covers minimum notice incidents (24Hrs).
- 7.3.2 Where an Intern is requested to work on their allocated days off, overtime payment is applicable if this falls within the weekly cycle only as referenced in 7.2.4 and 7.2.S A working day is recognised as the day in which a shift starts. Only in exceptional circumstances should Paramedic interns be required to work on their allocated days off .
- 7.3.3 Every consideration will be given to ensuring such short notice changes are distributed evenly and fairly among Interns so as to minimise the impact of such changes on any one individual.
- 7.3.4 Such changes may be notified by a Paramedic Supervisor, Operations Resource Manager or Ambulance Control.
- 7.3.S In the context of utilising Interns as additional crews rather than focussing on covering short notice staff absences, the frequency of changes should be exceptional (see Sections S.3, 7.1).
- 7.3.6 Where the Intern concerned expresses difficulty with the change, the Intern should be advised to complete the shift and given the opportunity to discuss the matter when the potential for service interruption has passed.

7.4 CREWING LIMITATIONS

- 7.4.1 Interns have successfully completed the NQEMT examination and are placed on the Post Graduate Division of the PHECC Register for a 12 month period post NQEMT. Interns will benefit from working alongside a fully registered Paramedic for the 12 month Post Graduate Internship period.
- 7.4.2 From January 1st 2013, NAS will only permit Post Graduate Paramedic Interns to work alongside a fully registered Paramedic or Advanced Paramedic. Under no circumstances is it permitted to crew two postgraduate paramedic interns together..

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 8.1 This Guideline will be circulated electronically to all Managers, all Supervisors and Staff
- 8.2 This Guideline will be available in electronic format in each Ambulance Station and Ambulance Control for ease of retrieval and reference
- 8.3 Each Operational Support and Resilience Manager will ensure that the Manager/Supervisor responsible for updating Policies and Procedures will return the Confirmation Form to NAS Headquarters to confirm document circulation to all staff

9.0 REVISION AND AUDIT

- 9.1 This Guideline will remain under review and may be subject to change to facilitate any changes/developments in service requirements.
- 9.2 Each Operations Resource Manager will monitor compliance with this Guideline on a case by case basis and any deviation will be reported to the relevant Operations Performance Manager for remedial action
- 9.3 Any deviation will be followed up on as soon as practically possible so as to ensure the necessary remedial action is taken.
- 9.4 Area Operations Manager will review the effectiveness of this Procedure and propose amendments where deemed necessary.

10.1 REFERENCES

- None

11.0 APPENDICES

- Appendix I - Guideline Acknowledgement Form