

# The Woodlands Fire Department Operational Guidelines

## A-01 – OVERTIME

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### 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to establish a uniform method for maintaining minimum staffing and to stipulate a procedural guideline for filling overtime vacancies created by employee absence.

### 2.0 SCOPE

This guideline shall apply to all assigned shift personnel.

### 3.0 RATIONALE

A clearly defined procedure for filling overtime will assist fire department operations.

### 4.0 GUIDELINES

4.01 The Woodlands Fire Department shall fill overtime vacancies on a rank for rank basis if available. Vacancies shall be filled from a pre-established callback list. A master list of all shift personnel available to work overtime will be kept and monitored by the Battalion Chiefs. The list will be separated according to rank, with names listed alphabetically by last name. This list will be known as the “Call Back List.”

4.02 The Call Back List will be placed in the Battalion Chief’s office, and shall be kept in an accurate and up-to-date status by the on-duty Battalion Chief.

4.03 When an overtime vacancy is noted for the following shift, the on-duty Battalion Chief shall inform the person who has no scheduled relief, who shall be given the option of accepting the overtime shift.

***Exceptions:** In the event that an employee is in a ride-up capacity, he/she may not be given the option of accepting the overtime nor forced into the overtime; a person may not be asked to work a shift if working the shift will cause the person to work more than 48 consecutive hours. If an employee is in a ride-up capacity and no other employees are on-duty of the rank that the overtime is for, then the person for whom there is no scheduled relief shall be instructed to utilize the Call Back List as outlined in 4.04. Only after the list is exhausted may he/she accept the shift or be considered “Held Over” as described in 4.09.*

4.04 If the person who has no scheduled relief does not wish to work the overtime shift, he/she can find relief by using the pre-established Call Back List. The Battalion Chief shall indicate on the list where the employee is to begin calling, and the

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employee shall make record of who they call and the result of the call (*i.e., answering machine, busy, did not want overtime, etc.*). These records shall be retained at the fire station. The employee shall verify that the Call Back List at the station is the most current List on file by comparing the revision date on the List to that on file in the Share drive. An attempt should be made to contact any employees on duty at TWFD at their respective fire station prior to calling the number on the List. Employees calling the List shall allow the phone to ring for a reasonable time to give the recipient an opportunity to answer the phone. If a machine or voicemail picks up, a brief message should be left advising the nature of the call.

- 4.05 The employee will notify the Battalion Chief with the name of the person accepting overtime from the Call Back List and that name will be placed in the Overtime Call Book. If the person accepts the overtime in his/her slot, the name should not be placed in the Overtime Call Book, as the list was not utilized to fill the vacancy.
- 4.06 Absolutely no one will work over 48 continuous hours unless authorized by Management.
- 4.07 If a person with no scheduled relief is ineligible to accept the overtime shift, responsibility for working the shift will fall upon the next person of the rank and riding position that the vacancy is for based on the following rotation:
- E101 → TK101 → E102 → E103 → TK104 → E105 → TK106 → E107 → [repeat]  
*(i.e., if the person driving E102 is ineligible for D/O overtime, the D/O driving E103 will be responsible for the shift. If the person driving E103 is not a D/O, then responsibility will shift to E104, and so on. If no one of the rank of the vacancy is riding in that capacity i.e, all D/O's are off or riding up, then responsibility would move up to a person who holds the rank of the vacancy beginning with the unit that the vacancy is for and moving through the rotation above)*
- 4.08 In the case of the Firefighter rank, in which apparatus are staffed with 4-person companies, responsibility will fall from the person in the FF1 position on the logbook, to FF2, then move onto the next apparatus in the rotation.
- 4.09 If the Call Back List is exhausted and no one accepts the overtime, the person who has no relief will be Held Over (forced to work the shift). This has been commonly referred to as “being hung.” A person is “hung” only after the Call Back List has been exhausted. Prior to being “hung,” a person is merely “responsible” for the overtime.

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- 4.10 The Call Back List should be utilized for each occurrence of an overtime vacancy (*If the List is exhausted for one vacancy and another vacancy occurs, the List should be used again for the new vacancy*).
- 4.11 Held Over personnel may trade time out of rank to obtain relief, at the discretion of the Battalion Chief. Once a trade has been approved by the Battalion Chief, the vacancy is officially filled.
- 4.12 If an individual has been held responsible for a vacancy and has filled that vacancy as outlined in this guideline, then responsibility for any additional vacancies for which the same individual would also be held should be transferred. In this transfer, responsibility should fall to the next individual of the same rank and position (if available), following the rotation outlined in 4.07 and 4.08. If there are no other on-duty personnel of the same rank and position, then the individual will be held responsible again (“double jeopardy”).
- 4.13 Should a Battalion Chief vacancy exist for the following shift, the on-duty Battalion Chief shall be responsible for the shift and will be given the option of accepting the shift, unless meeting one of the exceptions in 4.03. If the Battalion Chief does not wish to work the overtime shift, he/she may attempt to obtain relief by using the Call Back List for the Battalion Chief rank. If the Call Back List is exhausted and no one accepts the overtime, the on-duty Battalion Chief will be held over. A held-over Battalion Chief may trade time out of rank as described in 4.11. If the on-duty Battalion Chief is in a ride-up capacity, he/she will be given the option of accepting the shift only after exhausting the Call Back List. If the on-duty Battalion Chief is ineligible to work the overtime shift under this guideline, responsibility for the shift will fall first to the on-duty Captain, then to the Lieutenants according to the rotation outlined in 4.07 (beginning with E101).
- 4.14 It is the responsibility of the on-duty Battalion Chief to furnish the employee responsible for overtime with the name of the employee to start calling. The on-Duty Battalion Chief shall also put the name of the person accepting the overtime in the Battalion Chief Overtime Call Book when he/she is so advised by the employee making the calls. The employees are responsible for all calling and reporting of names in the station log books.
- 4.15 Should situations arise not covered in this guideline, the Battalion Chief, or Acting Battalion Chief, has the authority to mitigate the situation as necessary to carry out the department mission.

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- 4.16 Any errors or omissions occurring as a result of failure to follow the procedure outlined in this guideline by shift personnel (excluding the Battalion Chief or acting Battalion Chief) may not be grieved under Article 11 of the Labor Agreement. Errors or omissions made by the acting Battalion Chief, Battalion Chief, or any other Chief Officer are subject to grievance under Article 11 of the Labor Agreement.