



SITREP 27/16

Is your Service Allowance being paid? Update #1

Many permanent members have inquired about missing Service Allowances following SITREP 26, with one member already receiving almost \$500 in back pay as a result. So members are once again reminded to check your payslips for Service Allowances, which to be clear are payable to all QFs, SFs and LFs with five or more years service, but are not payable to firefighters while in Operational Support positions, nor to officers (SO and above) at any time.

SITREP 26 also caused the Department to last week update the payslip description from "Badge" to "Service" allowances, showing once again that management reads and relies on SITREP too!

Overtime after 24hr shifts

Confusion has crept into the requirements of relief after working 24hr shifts. Some zones have fallen back into the old habit of starting members on recall at 1000hrs even if the relief can get to the station earlier, and others are holding members back for up to 4hrs waiting for a relief. Neither is acceptable.

The Award states:

- 8.12 *Employees may elect, but not be directed, to work in excess of sixteen (16) hours straight by way of overtime, an alternative roster or a change of shift agreement provided:*
 - 8.12.1 *that such employees have the Department's approval to do so; and*
 - 8.12.2 *that such employees have at least eight consecutive hours off duty between the cessation and recommencement of duty; and*
 - 8.12.3 *that no employee shall be permitted to work in excess of twenty four (24) hours straight except in the case of a call to an incident or other emergency circumstances, or a staff shortage pursuant to subclause 8.9.6.*

The "Default rosters, Alternative rosters and Changes of shift FAQs" which were prepared and agreed between the Union and the Department advises at 4.9:

4.9 What happens if I am required to stay back at the conclusion of my 24 hour shift?

While all employees may be held back for a staff shortage, priority will always be given to the relief of employees working in excess of 24 hours for any reason. Relief will occur as soon as reasonably practicable, either by the deployment of relievers or out duties or, if necessary, by early recall (ie, it will not be necessary for employees on recall to wait until 1000 hours to commence duty).

Off duty members on recall should always commence duty as soon as possible after they arrive at the station and on shift relievers (including outduties) should be sent to the nearest station requiring relief. If it appears likely that a stay back will run over 2 hours because an on duty reliever/outduty will not be able arrive within that time then a short-term recall should be arranged immediately in order to release the member from the off-going shift as soon as possible. The recall can then wait for the reliever.

State Committee officials are available 24/7 to assist members with any change of shift problems and as always, remain open to feedback and suggestions from members on how to better manage these issues.

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TURC - all tip and no iceberg

Anyone remember the Trade Union Royal Commission (aka TURC)?

When TURC Commissioner Dyson Heydon finally delivered his much-anticipated report after almost \$61M, 2 years, 500 witnesses and 189 hearing days, he claimed to have found "the tip of an enormous iceberg" of union corruption. Yet there has been only one conviction to date and most of the charges Heydon recommended have since been thrown out or dropped altogether. As one scribe quipped, for \$61M you'd want to get the whole iceberg!

Meanwhile, the Turnbull Government continues to press an anti-union, anti-worker agenda in Parliament - including its spurious Fair Work (Respect for Emergency Services Volunteers) Bill (*see SITREP 25's "Turnbull Govt turns on fires - update #1"*). The Bill is presently before a Senate Committee review that has received hundreds of submissions from interested individuals and organisations (including the FBEU), many of which (including the FBEU's) have still not been posted to the Parliament's website almost two weeks later. Links to both FBEU's submission and that website can be found in the online version of this SITREP.

Retained authorised duties and verbal orders

It appears that many retained stations are being verbally ordered to cut SIMS checks and engine keeping duties to ensure zones don't go over budget. Directions are that if the equipment hasn't been used since the last check then don't check it now. It's understandable why orders as irresponsible and dangerous as this would be issued verbally, because if and when something goes wrong it allows management to deny the order was ever given.

Members are reminded to observe the Union's standing instruction from SITREP 43/2014 *"to ignore any management direction, written or verbal, to reduce your station's authorised duties hours and to continue to work to the hours set out in Commissioner's Orders 2013/06. Any member challenged for observing this instruction should contact the Union immediately."*

Mass sackings in Manchester?

The UK's Fire Brigades Union is reporting the Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service is planning to sack all of its 1250 firefighters and then re-employ only those who agree to a new 12 hour shift system. The FBU estimates 250 positions - 20% of total firefighter positions - will be lost, if the proposed change to 12 hour shifts (the third roster change since 2006) goes ahead.

Cuts of over 28 million pounds have already seen the loss of over 400 GMFRS firefighter positions, with a further 14.4 million pounds in cuts to come. Meanwhile, fire related deaths have risen threefold and rescues have increased by 140%.

Leighton Drury
State Secretary

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