



# SITREP 22/17

## e-Recalls initiative – update #1

SITREP 19 reported on our in-principle agreement with the Department for an electronic recall system, and on some of the differences between management's proposed system and ours. Feedback from members in the fortnight following has caused some tweaks to our proposal, which have since been put to the Department, but negotiations continue and we remain open to further member input.

The Department has attempted to respond to our criticism of its system's need to override/ignore recall lists if the recall distance is "too far" by offering to automatically approve any recall if the return distance involved is 30km or less, however this remains inequitable and unfair. For example, there are 23 stations within 15 km of 27 Parramatta and 38 stations within 15km of 22 Leichhardt, but only 4 stations within 15km of 87 Rosemeadow and only 1 station within 15km of 75 Berowra.

The Department's system remains unable to produce a recall list because it cannot tell how many kms are involved with each recall until it actually arises. The Union is calling for published lists because (a) they are transparent and (b) they give members a reasonable idea of your chances of actually getting a recall, and therefore whether or not to put your (off duty) life on hold. For example, under the Department's system a member at 76 Bondi could be number 1 on the list for a recall at 11 Woollahra but number 30 on the list for a recall at 86 Penrith and they'd never know until they'd either got the recall at 11, or received a message saying they'd been overlooked for 86 due to excess kms.

The Union is proposing to overcome these problems by replacing km payments with a universal \$37.50 Recall Allowance, thereby removing the need for Duty Commanders to override a list for excess kms and allowing every member to see exactly where they are on that day's recall list. Members could perform a recall 100km away, or at their own station, and be paid the same \$37.50 Recall Allowance for either, and overtime would be shared across the entire job rather than across the zone only.

A Recall Allowance (which would require approval by an SGM) improves on the Department's proposal by making the recall system more visible and objective. We have abandoned (for now at least) the SMS notification of our earlier proposal and adopted the Department's system where members nominate the date(s) and time(s) they are available for recall, so the system would work like this:

1. Members would nominate the dates and times they were available for recall (ie, the same as the Department's system), but there would be no need to nominate where you were prepared work.
2. A single "live" list of all of the members available for recall each day would be visible by all members through SAM. Each list, which would be ordered by the overtime hours worked, would be continually updated according to the members who joined or withdrew from that day's list.
3. A single officer at a central point (this could be the Relay Officer, a rotating Duty Commander or a firefighter on alternate duties) would receive the recall list from SAM asap after the change of shift and commence calling members by order of that day's list. The first member on the list would be offered the choice of all of the available recalls, which would be explained by both location and duration, for example. *"there are four recalls available - 6 hours at 12 Balmain, 10 hours at 8 Liverpool, 12 hours at 503 Wollongong and 22 hours at 45 Miranda"*. If the member elected to take the 22 hours at Miranda then the next member would be called *"there are three recalls available - 6 hours at 12 Balmain, 10 hours at 8 Liverpool and 12 hours at 503 Wollongong"*, and so on until all of the recalls were filled.



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The flat Recall Allowance would allow a member on the list to knock back a recall without penalty if the recall in question was over (say) 30km return and/or more than 90 minutes travel from the time of notification. This is different from the Department's system, where the Duty Commander decides if the distance to be travelled is too far (or would take too long), because the member would be responsible for deciding if they could make that trip in time. If a member accepted a recall at a station 200km and 2.5 hours away then they'd be open to disciplinary action if they failed to report for duty by the designated time, but this is no different to what happens now if a member accepts a recall and fails to show without good reason. An MVA en-route would be a good reason. Greedily taking a recall that they could never get to in time would not be.

The Union's revised system:

- Offers published lists which provide greater transparency and convenience for members than the Department's system, which continues to provide no published lists;
- Maintains the integrity of the lists and avoids disputes by removing the need for the Duty Commander to override the list in order to save on km payments;
- Allows members to perform overtime anywhere (within reason), thereby sharing the opportunity to work overtime more equitably amongst the membership at large;
- Avoids the need under the Department's system for multiple Duty Commanders to be calling members (and often the same member at the same time); and
- Is simpler, and does away with the Department's strange and confusing "exclusion zones".

There are a few further adjustments required, like a provision to skip members on the list in order to find a member who holds a required qualification for a particular recall, and perhaps a rule that staybacks and recalls worked (or knocked back) for periods of less than 6 hours would not count towards a member's list position (it is already difficult enough to find members to work short-term recalls to cover mid-shift consolidated leave absences without penalising the members who agree to).

Finally, the supposedly cash-strapped Department recently engaged a clerk to conduct local "training" sessions for stations on its proposed system. This is problematic for at least three reasons:

- (1) it is a temporary role that is perfectly suited to a firefighter on alternative duties;
- (2) the e-Recall system remains under negotiation and therefore liable to change; and
- (3) we've had numerous reports of misinformation about the Union's position coming out of these sessions, including allegations of non-Sydney sub-branch votes that have not occurred and criticism that the Union's position is designed to protect overtime outside of the GSA, which is plainly untrue. Members are again reminded that if you want to know your Union's position on something then don't rely on (or trust) your employer for that information, ask us.

The Department is yet to respond to our latest proposal, which remains subject to negotiation and open to further adjustment through member comments and suggestions by email to [recalls@fbeu.net](mailto:recalls@fbeu.net). Members interested in this issue can also visit the e-Recall thread on the Union's online forum. The Union isn't looking for a fight with the Department over recalls, just a better system. More to follow.

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary

Wednesday 14 June 2017