



SitRep 1/2021

COVID-19 Restrictions

Over the Christmas/New Year period there was a bit of confusion surrounding some COVID-related issues. We have consulted with FRNSW through the COVID-19 IMT to try and resolve this.

Meals

We had a lot of inquiries regarding when and when not to visit public places and if meals can be bought on duty. I direct members to the 2 January 2021 email from the COVID-19 IMT which states:

“Considerations to minimising movements within the community, particularly around shopping centres and other identified venues, to essential reasons only, to reduce the risk of exposure to you and to FRNSW. Masks are now mandatory in all retail environments and we must be compliant with these orders.”

If meals are required to be purchased on duty then members should do so whilst limiting risk of exposure by wearing masks, ordering ahead, practicing social distancing, leaving the venue as soon as possible etc.

PCOS

Some members reported having their PCOS arrangements knocked back for COVID-related reasons. Through discussions with the COVID-19 IMT, this issue has now been resolved and PCOS can continue. However, please be mindful of any additional risks such as hotspots. If members continue to have problems, please contact your SCOM rep or the Union office.

Award Update

Your Award Working Group reconvened this morning to set our priorities for the resumption of negotiations and are ready to get back to it. The Department will be back on board next week and our meetings will recommence then. We'll continue to keep you updated as things progress.

Return to Work

Members who are injured outside of work (i.e. not a worker's compensation matter) or who undergo any type of medical procedure should, when they are ready to return to work, have their treating physician complete the attached [FRNSW Medical Assessment Form](#). This will save the member time in dealing with FRNSW's inconsistent return to work procedures and hopefully ensure a smoother transition back to work.

Retained Additional Public Holiday Pay

A reminder for Retained members that 28 December was an additional public holiday and therefore attracted overtime rates.

Per 6.10.2 of the Retained Award, overtime for any work on the 28th is paid at time and a half for the first two hours, then double time for any time after that.

If you worked that day, check your next payslip to make sure you were paid overtime rates. Contact the Union if you need assistance.



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COVID - Retained Authorised Duties

Following recent updates to COVID-19 restrictions, Metro Retained stations have had varying information provided to them by their zone commands about what they can and cannot do. Apparently, a number of zones have been told that no authorised duties are to be carried out and to only attend the fire station for fire calls.

This is not only incorrect but irresponsible. Authorised duties such as SIMS and Engine Keeping are safety related and must be undertaken - two hours per week per appliance for SIMS and one hour per week per appliance for Engine Keeping. Station-based authorised duties such as cleaning, gardening, completion of fire reports and station management should also continue.

Community-based authorised duties should be limited where possible in line with COVID-19 restrictions. However, some activities such as hydrant checks can be completed with no community interaction. If you are going into the community to perform authorised duties such as hydrants, wear a mask and gloves, maintain social distancing and avoid contact with the public where possible.

Authorised duties are an Award condition and ensure that you can complete your job and get home safely. The pandemic is not an excuse to undermine these conditions.

Contact the Union if you have any issue around authorised duties.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary