

Call-back survey response summary

February 2009

Six seniors centres responded to the ESCC's request for information about policies covering **staff emergency call-backs**. We asked, "When an emergency occurs at your office, who gets called back to work and how is that employee compensated? Do you have a rotating call-back schedule? Are employees compensated for being 'on call'?"

Only one of the respondents, the **Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)**, has **formalized policies** with respect to call-backs and we were given permission to share them. Here are the two relevant sections:

OVERTIME

- The Employer shall determine when overtime is necessary and for what period of time it is required. Daily hours of work in excess of seven (7) hours or 7.75 hours for staff who are participating in the compressed work option, for non-management staff will be covered by compensatory time off at straight time for the first one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) hour and one and one-half times ($1\frac{1}{2}x$) thereafter.
- For staff who are paid an hourly wage, daily hours of work in excess of eight (8) hours per day and/or forty (40) hours per week shall be covered by compensatory time off at straight time for the first one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) hour and one and one-half times ($1\frac{1}{2}x$) thereafter.
- Overtime shall not be paid when the reason for working the overtime is the result of the employee attending a medical appointment or other personal appointment at the employer's expense.
- Employees required to work by the Employer on their scheduled day(s) off shall be covered by compensatory time off at the rate of one and one half times ($1\frac{1}{2}x$).
- Overtime hours shall be used in the year in which they are earned. Under exceptional circumstances, upon receiving a written request, the Executive Director may permit an Employee to carry overtime hours owing into the next fiscal year.

ON-CALL

- Being on-call is not considered to be work and wages are not payable for on-call time.
- If an employee is required to attend a worksite as a result of being on-call, Article 6 shall apply and the overtime shall include travel to and from the work site.

“On-call is used at our Safe House where the two staff members rotate being on-call. The Director of Operations and ED will share on-call duties if (the two staff members) are both away for a weekend and during the holiday season.

“For the main site, we have four people who are on-call to respond to emergencies (in addition to the contracted building management company). The call order is Executive Director, Director of Operations, Manager of Administration, Food Services Manager.”

Other responses

Two centres indicated they have no call-back policy and have never needed one, as no situation has arisen in which it might have been applied.

Two centres use informal staff protocols to deal with emergencies. At one, the executive director would be the first person called and, if he is out of town, the assistant director and/or board president would be expected to respond. At the other, the only paid employee would likely be called and expected to address the situation without added compensation.

In one instance, a particular staff member has been given the responsibility of dealing with emergency call-backs, whether for an after-hours building issue (heat/cold/flooding/fire/break-and-enter etc.) or for an on-site severe injury, even when she is not scheduled to be at work. She works flex time and is expected to manage her weekly hours within a certain period of time, generally a two week period. This means she may work 10 hours one day but take off an afternoon on one of the following days. In a situation where those hours cannot be taken off within the next time period and she must go into overtime, the time is supposed to be compensated as double time off in lieu. The reality, however, is that if she did take double time she feels she would be twice as far behind and unable to catch up. She therefore makes every effort to manage her hours within the identified regular time.

In the case of one agency, its security company has a list of managers and the ED. If there is a problem, the company goes through the list until someone has been contacted. A security service responder meets up with

the staff member if it is necessary to enter the building after hours. The security company is paid. The staff member is not, as responding to emergencies is considered part of management's responsibilities.