



**ORANGE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Policy Number: 5.1	Effective Date: 18 SEPTEMBER 2025
Chapter: Emergency Medical Services	
Name: Schedule and Attendance	
Rescinds/Replaces: 100.2 EMS Attendance	Revision Date: 18 AUGUST 2025
Approved by Director:	

SCHEDULE AND ATTENDANCE

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Emergency Services Department that all personnel arrive on-time and prepared to perform their assigned duties as assigned by the published EMS schedule. Personnel unable to meet these expectations are required to provide adequate notice in order to mitigate impacts to essential operations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clearly define the expectations for attendance, the methods of utilizing the various forms of leave to which staff members have access, and the fair, clear and consistent application of corrective actions, including disciplinary action, related to attendance. Regardless of the reason, an employee not able to work a scheduled shift will be considered tardy or absent as set forth in this policy.

SCOPE

These standards apply to all non-exempt EMS Division personnel.

DEFINITIONS

Absent - Employee misses a full or partial shift. If a tardy extends further than 1 hour after start of shift, this becomes an absence.

Clock in/out - Creating a timestamp in the time tracking application via phone or internet for arriving to work, going to and returning for lunch and leaving work.

Coaching - Coaching is the first step in intervening in workplace performance. This is non-disciplinary and provides a space for the supervisor and employee to meet to mitigate future performance problems.

Counseling - Counseling is non-disciplinary and provides a final space for the supervisor and employee to meet to mitigate advancing to disciplinary action.

Early Departure - Employee leaves prior to end of scheduled shift end time.

No Call, No Show - An employee misses a Scheduled operational shift with improper or no notification to an EMS Battalion Chief. This falls under personal conduct as defined in Orange County handbook.

Notification – The employee contacting the EMS Battalion Chief by direct phone call. Other forms of communicating an absence or tardy are not acceptable.

Occurrence - Any unscheduled absence, tardiness, or early departure. Each occurrence lasts one year.

On Time - Between 10-15 minutes prior to the start of shift. (I.e. For an 0600 hours shift, arrival between 0545-0550 hours is considered on time.)

Tardy - An employee will be considered tardy if they fail to clock in 10 minutes prior to the start of shift but less than 1 hour after the start of shift. (If you are later than 1 hour from the start of shift, this becomes an absence.)



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I. PROCEDURE

1. EMS SCHEDULE

It is the employee's responsibility to check the approved EMS Schedule on a regular basis. It is advised that this is accomplished during each shift and prior to the start of the employee's next shift. In the event of a scheduling change for a full-time employee by an EMS Battalion Chief, the employee will be notified as soon as possible. Temporary or Managed Self-Scheduled employees should check the EMS Schedule on a regular and frequent basis. Any discrepancies must be sent to their EMS Battalion Chief immediately.

2. COMPLIANCE MONITORING

1. EMS Battalion Chiefs shall monitor all assigned employees' attendance on a regular basis and address unsatisfactory attendance in a timely and consistent manner with documentation.
2. If the Battalion Chief recognizes a pattern of unscheduled usage of leave or tardiness, this shall be discussed with the employee. Battalion Chiefs will engage in documented discussion with employees regarding options to improve attendance.
3. The goals of the discussion are to: 1) communicate the EMS Battalion Chief's concern to the employee; 2) determine the cause of the employee's noncompliance; 3) identify avenues for improvement and/or development; and 4) improve the employee's performance.

3. SHIFT EXPECTATIONS

1. All personnel are expected to arrive on time to shift. The official EMS schedule reflects the shift times.
2. Clock-ins prior to fifteen minutes before the shift start time will be adjusted by the EMS Battalion Chief unless the employee is given an assignment by an EMS Battalion Chief or takes an early EMS call.
3. Unless held over by a late call or by an EMS Battalion Chief, providers are expected to clock out no later than fifteen minutes from the end of their assigned shift.
4. Personnel are expected to email the Battalion Chief with the CFS number if they receive a late call and have a late clock out.
5. Battalion Chiefs are expected to address patterns of late clock outs with employees and to document on the timecard the reason for the late clock out. Unauthorized late punches shall be adjusted by the EMS Battalion Chiefs.
6. Shift overlap time between oncoming and off going crews allows for exchange of equipment, documentation and briefing between crews. This time shall be utilized for official work duties only.
7. 24-hour personnel may be held over for a maximum of 2 hours at the Battalion Chief's discretion.
8. 12-hour personnel may be held over for a maximum of 3 hours at the Battalion Chief's discretion.

4. TARDIES

1. An employee will be considered tardy if they arrive at work less than 10 minutes prior to the start of shift but less than 1 hour after the start of shift.
2. An employee may have 4 tardies in a rolling 12-month period without initiating any disciplinary process. At 4 tardies, the Battalion Chief shall meet with the employee to have a Coaching Session to notify the employee of the tardies. The Battalion Chief may



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- recommend options including Employee Assistance Programs, change in shift assignments and referral to FMLA process.
3. If an employee has another tardy (total of 5), a Counseling Session shall be conducted with their Battalion Chief to discuss options to improve attendance or meet employee needs
 4. If an employee has another tardy (total of 6), documentation will be reviewed by the Battalion Chief and Division leaders. A meeting shall occur with the Battalion Chief and employee which may constitute an Oral Warning with Written Confirmation.
 5. If an employee has another tardy (total of 7), a meeting shall occur with the Battalion Chief and employee which may constitute a First Written Warning.
 6. If an employee has another tardy (total of 8), a meeting shall occur with the Battalion Chief and employee which may constitute a Final Written Warning.
 7. If an employee has another tardy (total of 9), the Battalion Chief may recommend continued disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
5. NO CALL, NO SHOW
1. No Call, No Show is a most serious violation of OCES standards, professionalism and of this attendance policy.
 2. The Department considers this "Absence without authorized leave and/or notice", a serious personal conduct violation under the County's personnel ordinance (§ 28A1-2).
 3. These personal conduct violations will be evaluated on an individual basis and the department will follow the personnel ordinance to address (the progressive discipline approach or an employee may be dismissed, demoted, or issued disciplinary suspension without pay without progressive warning for serious misconduct).
6. USE OF SICK LEAVE
1. All employees are entitled to use sick leave however the employee must have the sick leave balance equal to or greater than their request. As defined by the Orange County Handbook (pg. 29), Sick Leave may be granted for the following reasons:
 - Physical or mental illness, injury or pregnancy-related disability, which prevents an employee from performing their normal duties.
 - Care of a spouse, parent, or child who is ill.
 - Medical or dental appointments, including those necessary for a spouse, parent, or child.
 - Appointments with the Employee Assistance Program provider
 2. Battalion Chiefs shall track and document each employee's amount of sick leave in a manner that is accessible to both the Battalion Chief and the employee.
 3. As per the Orange County Handbook , Employees are expected to give their supervisor reasonable notice of any expected Sick Leave absence. It is recommended that EMS employees provide at least a 2-hour notification when notifying the Battalion Chief of their need for Sick Leave.
 4. In the event of an unexpected absence, employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor as soon as possible.
 5. An employee may use up to 96 hours of Sick Leave in a rolling 12-month period without initiating any disciplinary process.
 6. At 96 hours, the Battalion Chief shall meet with the employee to have a documented Coaching Session to notify the employee of their total use of Sick Leave. The Battalion Chief may recommend options including Employee Assistance Programs, change in shift assignments and referral to FMLA process.



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7. If an employee utilizes another 24 hours of Sick Leave (total: 120 hours), a Counseling Session shall be conducted with their Battalion Chief to discuss options to improve attendance or meet employee needs
 8. If an employee uses an additional 24 hours of Sick Leave (total: 144 hours), documentation will be reviewed by the Battalion Chief and Division leads. A meeting shall occur with the Battalion Chief and employee which may constitute an Oral Warning with Written Confirmation.
 9. If an employee uses an additional 24 hours of Sick Leave (total: 168 hours), a meeting shall occur with the Battalion Chief and employee which may constitute a First Written Warning.
 10. If an employee uses an additional 24 hours of Sick Leave (total: 192 hours), a meeting shall occur with the Battalion Chief and employee which may constitute a Final Written Warning.
 11. If an employee uses an additional 24 hours of Sick Leave (total: 216 hours), the Battalion Chief may recommend continued disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
 12. At any time, the Battalion Chief may require a physician's statement documenting the necessity for an absence, continued absence, and the capacity to resume work.
 13. The Department reserves the right to require employees to provide a note from a doctor verifying that extended absence was caused by a medical situation.
 14. If any employee's illness lasts more than two (2) consecutive 24-hour shifts or three (3) consecutive 12 hour shifts, a doctor's note shall be required.
 15. If the employee will miss more than three consecutive shifts or requests to use leave, the EMS Battalion Chief will refer the employee to the County's FMLA Management System (Unum) to determine FMLA eligibility.
 16. Administration may refer an employee to Orange County Human Resources for a fitness for duty evaluation following extended Sick Leave and/or signs that employee is having difficulties performing the physical duties and/or mental focus required of the position.
 17. Sick leave requests falling on County Holidays shall be accompanied by a physician's note indicating the absence was due to illness.
 18. Sick Leave requests shall be entered in KRONOS by the employee unless sick leave occurs near the pay period end date. The EMS Battalion Chief has the authority to enter leave with notation.
7. USE OF ANNUAL LEAVE
1. EMS battalion Chiefs shall follow the Orange County Personnel Ordinance when granting or denying leave requests.
 2. The employee shall have enough hours of leave to cover the request prior to EMS Battalion Chiefs approving leave.
 3. If an employee is scheduled to work a shift that falls the day before, the day of, or the day after a County Holiday, the staff member must arrange for their own coverage regardless of how far in advance the request is made.
 4. Annual leaves requests for extraordinary circumstances for the above shall not be approved by EMS Battalion Chief without authorization from the EMS Division Chief or designee.
 5. Annual leave requests shall be entered into Kronos prior to the 10th day of the month preceding the annual leave request.
 - a) Entering the request into the timekeeping software provides notification to the staff member's EMS Battalion Chief.
 - b) The employee will then email the EMS Battalion Chief email list (Emergency_Services_EMS_Battalion_Chief@orangecountync.gov) with the subject as "Leave Request" and the date requested, notifying all supervisors the request has been made.



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6. Once submitted, the staff member's direct Battalion Chief shall approve or deny the annual leave request within 5 days (No later than the 15th of the month proceeding the annual leave request).
 - a) Battalion Chiefs must remove the approved provider from their shift assignment and document the annual leave in the appropriate scheduling software vacation section along with the date the employee requested off
 - b) Battalion Chiefs shall confirm that the scheduling software is accurate by the 15th of each month.
7. Annual leave request approval and or denial shall be based on the following:
 - a) Requests will be granted or denied based on the subsection Adequate Staffing.
 - b) The employee must have an annual leave balance equal to or greater than the annual leave hours requested prior to the requested day off.
 - c) EMS Battalion Chiefs are responsible for assuring adequate staffing of their shifts in accordance with the subsection Adequate Staffing.
 - d) Short notice requests (requests made less than the 10th day of the month proceeding the annual leave request) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the assigned EMS Battalion Chief in consultation with the EMS Division Chief (or designee)
8. Candidates (trainees) shall submit the initial annual leave request to the EMS Training Officer via email.
 - a) Once the initial annual leave request has been submitted via email to the EMS Training Officer, the EMS Training Officer shall provide a written email response denying or approving the annual leave request to the Candidate within (5) days.
 - b) The candidate shall enter their annual leave requests into the timekeeping software prior to the 10th day of the month proceeding the annual leave request, unless special arrangements were made at the time of hire.
 - c) Entering the request into the timekeeping software provides notification to the EMS Training Officer.
 - d) Once the annual leave request has been submitted by the candidate, the EMS Training Officer shall approve or deny the annual leave request within 5 days (No later than the 15th of the month proceeding the annual leave request).
 - e) Candidates are subject to the same annual leave request guidelines as "Operational Staff (Released EMT or Paramedic)" however candidates operating in third rider position do not require the shift to be backfilled.
9. Adequate Staffing
 - a) The first paramedic and EMT who request off per shift (A,B,C,D,E, and F) requesting the use of annual leave shall be granted.
 - b) The second paramedic and EMT requesting the use of annual leave shall find their own coverage. Once coverage is obtained, the leave shall be approved.
 - c) Any subsequent paramedic and/or EMT requesting the use of annual leave shall be denied.
 - d) Managed Self-scheduled permanent personnel and temporary personnel shall be utilized for all natural vacancies or vacancies created from annual leave.

8. EMS BATTALION CHIEF ANNUAL LEAVE

1. Annual leave requests shall be entered into the time reporting software prior to the 10th day of the month proceeding the annual leave request. Entering the request provides notification to the EMS Battalion Chief's direct supervisor.
2. The scheduling software shall be updated with vacancies prior to the 15th of the month proceeding any requests.



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3. If less notice is given than outlined in the operational staff section, EMS Battalion Chiefs are required to fill their own annual leave request with a qualified replacement (Relief Battalion Chief).
4. Once the requesting EMS Battalion Chief has covered their requested annual leave with qualified replacement(s) using the process outlined below, the EMS Battalion Chief shall send an email to the Deputy Chief of EMS Operations indicating they have found coverage. The email shall contain the names of the qualified replacement(s) and the dates they are covering.
5. The EMS Battalion Chief's direct supervisor shall provide a written email response denying or approving the "annual leave" request within (5) days.
6. EMS Battalion Chiefs shall not remove themselves from the official EMS schedule until they have received written approval from their direct supervisor.
7. Adequate Staffing
 - a) One EMS Battalion Chief or acting EMS Battalion Chief is required for each shift. The first EMS Battalion Chief who requests the use of annual leave shall be backfilled coverage based on the following order of preference.
 - b) Relief Battalion Chief assigned to their shift.
 - c) Relief Battalion Chief assigned to another shift
 - d) EMS Battalion Chief assigned to another shift

II. EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY

1. Rare and extenuating personal circumstances will always be considered and evaluated on an individual basis by supervisory personnel. The Division Chief of EMS, or designee, will have final authority to allow for exceptions in these situations.
2. Absence and Tardy arrivals that are on the EMS Schedule and approved (including approved annual leave, FMLA, ADA worker's compensation leave, bereavement, jury duty, military service, and/or any other absences permitted by federal, state and local laws) are not subject to this policy unless used fraudulently.
3. All Emergency Services Department personnel are subject to emergency callbacks during emergencies including, but not limited to, during Declared States of Emergency. The department and the County reserve the right to amend the published schedule, including rescinding approved annual leave, if necessary, to ensure the provision of statutorily required services. Any such action may only be authorized by the Director of Emergency Services.