


	<b>TRAVIS COUNTY ESD #5 MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE Department Policy</b>	<h1>E101.1</h1>
	Authorized by:  Fire Chief Chris Barron	<b>Effective:</b> 2-16-2024 <b>Rescinds:</b> E101 <b>Reference:</b> ESD5 Handbook <b>Application:</b> Shift Personnel
<h2>Operations Staffing</h2>		

### I. Purpose

To establish guidelines and expectations for the Operations staffing of Manchaca Fire/Rescue and the utilization of part-time personnel.

### II. Background

The ESD5 Personnel Handbook states the preferred staffing for on duty shift responders at 6 personnel. It also recognizes an acceptable minimum staffing level of 3 personnel that are certified as fire and medical responders per TCFP and COG requirements. The department supports the routine coverage of shift vacancies to maintain 4-person staffing for the first-out apparatus.

### III. Policy

A. **Defining shift work periods.** Manchaca Fire/Rescue will normally operate on a 48-hours on, 96-hours off schedule with three shifts providing 24-hour emergency response coverage for the community.

1. **Subdivision of work periods.** Each 48-hour work period (shift) will be subdivided into a first and second 24-hour period (first half, second half) designated by the shift letter and a sequential number. Example: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2.
2. **Purpose of subdivisions.** The subdivision of the shifts will be to assist with designating rules for leave and coverage activities such as calling off duty, scheduling PTO, as well as submitting for and awarding of coverage shifts.

B. **Maintenance of staffing levels.** It will be the department’s normal practice to cover vacancies in order to maintain 4-person staffing on the front-line engine.

1. **Shift change relief.** Off-going personnel shall remain on duty until properly relieved in order to maintain preferred staffing. The minimum standard for “proper relief” is defined as the relieving member being properly dressed and groomed to present a professional appearance, they have set their PPE at the apparatus, and the PPE has been inspected and determined to be mission ready. There is then a face-to-face communication to formally relieve the off-going member.

2. **Utilization of minimum staffing.** Minimum staffing of 3 personnel may be permitted under the following conditions:

- a. **No staffing available.** If all avenues have been exhausted for providing coverage, including mandatory holdover of off-going personnel, staffing may be allowed to operate at 3-personnel until coverage can be found. An example would be a member that becomes ill or injured after shift change and is unable to safely or effectively perform their duties.
- b. **Temporary vacancy.** A staffing vacancy that is expected to occur for 3 hours or less may be allowed to go uncovered. This practice should be an exception and not the rule. It is still expected that an attempt will be made to find coverage. Only after the coverage attempt fails shall the temporary vacancy option be considered.
- c. **Chief's authorization.** The Chief of the Department may provide specific instruction that 3-person staffing is authorized for specific operational or budgetary conditions.
- d. **Notice of operation at minimum staffing.** A Command Officer shall be notified as soon as it becomes apparent that there is the potential to drop to 3-person staffing (i.e. emergency leave, sudden illness, AWOL member, etc.). Any time the department is operating at minimum staffing without a preauthorization from the Chief, a Command Officer shall be notified.

C. **Leave rules.** Regular leave requests will typically be made through and approved/denied by the Command Officer. Depending on the timing of a request, the on duty Company Officer may manage the leave request. All leave requests shall be in accordance with this policy and the Personnel Handbook. When a vacancy in the shift schedule occurs, a notification will be sent to all part time personnel first then shift staff of the available vacancy. The vacancy will be filled in accordance with department policy and the Personnel Handbook. In the event of an unexpected or sudden illness or absence, the on duty officer shall document the leave and assist with securing coverage for the vacancy.

1. **Maximum leave permitted per shift.** No more than two full-time shift members shall be preapproved for regularly scheduled leave at the same time. Leave will typically be granted on a first-come, first-served basis. Conflicts over the awarding of leave will be referred to the Command Officer.
2. **Requesting leave.** It is the responsibility of the member to submit a leave request and have it approved by a Command Officer before the end of the member's regular shift before the leave is to be taken (96 hours notice). Requests for leave may be made up to 6 months in advance. Leave for a department recognized holiday must be requested at least one full pay period before the date (a minimum of 2 weeks notice with the request occurring a minimum of a pay period before the holiday). A department recognized holiday are those holidays listed in section 6.4 of the personnel handbook. A request for a holiday is not approved until coverage has been confirmed. Member's should always provide as much notice as possible for upcoming leave requests. A leave request may be classified as a regular request, a short-notice request, late-notice request, or on-duty leave request.

- a. **Regular request.** A regular request is one that is made with at least 96 hours notice ( or two weeks for department recognized holiday) and is typically processed through the Command Officer. If the Command Officer is not available before the notice deadline to process the request, the on duty shift Officer shall process the request.
  - b. **Short-notice leave request.** A short-notice request is a request for non-illness/non-personal emergency leave that is made with less than 96 hours notice. The member requesting short-notice leave must identify coverage for their leave utilizing department policy and the rules of the Personnel Handbook. The member is ultimately responsible for securing coverage for short-notice leave requests. If coverage for the leave is not identified, the request will be denied. Patterned occurrences of short-notice leave should be avoided.
  - c. **Late-notice request.** Leave requests made after 1900 hours the night before the beginning of a shift are limited to emergency request for events such as illness or personal emergencies. The member shall report off to the on duty Officer as soon as practical. The on duty officer shall inform a command officer of the request and followed by making the necessary notices to secure coverage in accordance with department policy and the Personnel Handbook.
  - d. **On-duty leave.** If a member becomes ill, injured, or experiences a personal emergency while on duty and must leave during the shift, the on-duty Officer shall secure coverage for the vacancy. In this case, the vacancy can be filled by staffing with whichever member can quickly return the company to full staffing and meets the qualification needs that the vacancy created.
3. **Notice of vacancies.** The Captain or Chief will be responsible for managing the leave request in accordance with section III.C.2, above shall send a notice of vacancy via the Active 911 app. In addition, a notice shall be created in ESO Scheduling by creating an “Unassigned” shift opening. Requests to fill vacancies must be submitted no later than 96 hours prior to the shift date. If the vacancy cannot be filled with “Rank to Rank” within the allotted time, preference will be given to members on a “first come, first serve” basis, regardless of rank. This will allow the officer ample time to fill the position. Requests to fill vacancies due to regular requests will typically remain open for a minimum of 24 hours before they are awarded. Short-notice and late-notice leave requests will be filled in a shorter time period. On-duty leave issues will be filled as soon as practical by the Company Officer or higher class. Vacancies for both halves of a shift will be broadcast and awarded as two vacancies (first half vacancy and second half vacancy).
- a. **Time for response.** Once a notice of vacancy is given, time will be given for a response from available members. The amount of time available will depend on the timing of the request.
    - 1) **Regular-request.** 24 hours will be given from the time of the request until it is filled. Should the request not be filled in the 24-hour period, additional requests may be sent as the leave date draws closer.

- 2) **Short-notice request.** 24 hours will be given for short-leave requests unless the request is within 24 hours of the leave date. In this case, a minimum of 2 hours will be given to fill the request. Additional notices may be given in the request is not filled.
  - 3) **Late-notice request.** 2 hours will be given for late-notice requests unless the request is within 2 hours of the leave time. In this case, coverage will be granted as soon as possible based on the ability to quickly fill the vacancy with the proper qualifications.
  - 4) **On-duty request.** Unexpected absences that occur during a shift will be filled as soon as possible based on the ability to quickly fill the vacancy with the proper qualifications.
- b. **Member responsibility for receiving notices.** Members that wish to receive staffing notices should ensure that their contact information is correct in ESO and they have not opted out of receiving regular or urgent alerts. Members that wish to receive alerts when sent via Active 911 should be opted in. Members have been given the ability to select and deselect alerting groups in the app so that they can elect to receive staffing alerts and not be disturbed by other alerts while off duty.
4. **Posting leave.** As shift vacancies occur, they shall be posted on ESO as a vacant shift openings. The member with leave will have their category for that shift, or portion thereof, changed to reflect the appropriate leave. The personnel at the rank of Engineer or higher have the software permissions to perform this task.
  5. **Preference in filling vacancies.** When a full-time member is scheduled off duty, the preference for finding coverage will be to fill the vacancy with a qualified part-time member first. This may include assigning the part-time member to a lower position and having a full-time member ride up in a higher-class position to complete coverage. If no part-time members are available to fill the vacancy, the vacancy may then be filled with a qualified full-time member. This may also include the option to hire the full-time member at a lower position and have another full-time member ride up in a higher-class position to complete coverage. If no full-time personnel are available, the vacancy may be filled by a qualified part-time member. This may include assigning the member to a lower position and having a full-time member ride up in a higher-class position to complete coverage. If no members respond to cover the position, mandatory coverage may be required from a member of the off-going shift if the vacancy is occurring at the beginning of the on-coming shift.
    - a. **Continuous hours limitations.** In addition to the preferences above, selections should be made to avoid members working more than 72 continuous hours without a 24 hour break. Continuous hours worked by a part-time member should be confirmed before awarding a vacancy.
    - b. **Placement of part-time.** Typically, part-time personnel will be utilized at the firefighter rank. Part-time members that are qualified to drive may be assigned to do so if there is no full-time firefighter available on the crew to step up in a higher-class position to drive. The Lieutenant in charge may allow, at their discretion, a qualified part-time member to drive the apparatus

in order to maintain skills. Part-time members qualified to be in charge may be placed in that position when the Lieutenant is off duty and there is no full-time Engineer available to ride higher class.

c. **Placement of full-time members.** When utilizing full-time personnel to fill a vacancy, it is preferable to fill the vacancy with a member of equal rank. If a member of equal rank is not available, a member of lower rank may fill the vacancy as long as they or another crewmember is qualified to work higher-class.

1) **Use of higher ranks to fill lower ranks.** If there is not a qualified member of equal or lower rank available, a member of higher rank may be utilized for coverage. If the higher rank member cannot fill their regular position because the regular member at that rank is on duty (i.e. two Lieutenants on duty or two Engineers and a Lieutenant on duty), they will fill a lower rank and operate in the chain of command at that position while filling the vacancy. If a Lieutenant is working in the role of Engineer or Firefighter, they will utilize the spare yellow helmet available in the PPE locker room (where the higher-class helmet is stored).

d. **Multiple responses to fill a vacancy.** Should multiple qualified members of equal preference respond to the request to fill a vacancy, the Officer or Acting Officer can run a report on hours worked to determine who should be awarded the coverage. The report to run is under ESO Scheduling/Payroll Reports / Payroll Detail by Date Span. The date range should be Calendar Year to Date. The qualified member with the fewest hours worked in the calendar year to date shall be awarded the coverage. In the event of a tie, the choice will be at the discretion of the person filling the assignment.

6. **Qualified position.** In any staffing situation, the member assigned to a position or hired to fill a vacancy shall have the proper qualifications to work the position to which they are assigned. Temporary authorization to fill a position with lesser qualifications can only be made by a Command Officer.

7. **Higher-class.** Members that hold the appropriate qualifications to work the next higher rank may do so in a temporary capacity when that position is vacant and needs to be filled by available on duty personnel. The member assuming a higher-class role operates in the chain of command at that level and assumes the responsibilities and duties of that rank for the period of time they are in the higher-class role. Assumption of higher class-duties does not constitute a promotion or entitle the member to the position.

8. **Accuracy in timekeeping.** A member's leave, trades, and time on duty shall be reported and documented accurately and honestly. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

D. **Trades.** Two full-time members may trade scheduled work time within the rules listed in this section and with approval of the organization.

1. **Trade privilege.** The trading of scheduled work time is a privilege allowed by Manchaca Fire/Rescue between its full-time members. All trades must be recorded in ESO. Failure to follow trade procedures may result in loss of trading privileges and/or disciplinary action. Since trading time is a privilege initiated between individual members, Manchaca Fire/Rescue and ESD 5 assumes no responsibility for time owed by any person leaving the employment of the organization.
2. **Preference of trading partner.** It is the first preference to trade with a member of the same rank. If a trade with a member of the same rank is not possible, the member may attempt to trade with a member of the adjacent higher or lower rank. If a trade with a member of the adjacent rank is not possible, the member may attempt to trade with a member of any rank.
3. **Available qualifications.** Any trade must take into reasonable consideration that there will be an appropriate combination of qualifications on duty when the trade occurs (two firefighter qualified members, one Engineer qualified member, and one officer qualified member).
4. **Documentation of trades.** All trades must be recorded in ESO. Trades involving officers must be approved by a Command Officer.
  - a. **Timekeeping.** The member working the trade shall be the one paid for that shift.
5. **Disapproval of trade.** If a supervisor disapproves a trade, a written reason for trade disapproval shall be forwarded to the Command Officer. If incompetence is the reason for disapproval, specific deficiencies with MFR policy and procedure will be documented.
6. **Maximum trade indebtedness.** A member cannot be indebted to another member for more than 48 hours at a time from open trades. A member cannot be indebted for more than 96 hours in trades with any combination of members at any one time.
7. **Pattern trading.** Members will not enter into pattern trades that serves the purpose of altering the member normal work schedule. Examples of pattern trades may include, but are not exclusive of, standing trades for early relief or regular trades to allow a member to be off every Saturday.
8. **Trade payback deadline.** All trades must be completed (both sides of the trade worked) within 180 days of the first half date of the trade. A second half trade that is not scheduled or repaid within 180 days shall be considered a failed trade.
9. **Failed trades.** If either member is unable to work their portion of an approved and scheduled trade, that member shall repay the District for the lost time. Unless in an emergency situation, the District shall give the member at least 48 hours notice of when the time will be repaid. The Commanding Officer (Capt./Chief) will attempt to schedule the payback time within 90 days of the failed trade.

10. **Holdover trade.** A member requesting a short trade (less than one hour) may request a “holdover trade” from an off-going shift member. The same partner preference applies as listed in III.D.2, above. No preapproval is required for a holdover trade.

E. **Additional Staffing.** Regular staffing levels may be increased with Command Officer authorization for special occasions such as red flag days, expected severe weather, or special details. Additionally, regular staffing levels may be augmented by volunteer members pulling shifts with the on duty crew.

1. **Staffing of additional units.** A Command Officer can authorize additional paid staffing and the staffing of additional apparatus as situations warrant. For special events such as parades, displays, or similar events, an additional apparatus may be staffed with fewer members than it would normally have for emergency response. On such occasions, the apparatus will be placed out of service. When staffing for emergency response, the staffing levels for additional apparatus should be:

a. **Engine staffing.** Minimum of 3 personnel with an officer qualified member and a Engineer qualified for that apparatus.

b. **Tender staffing.** Minimum of 1 qualified Engineer (two members preferred)

c. **Brush Truck staffing.** Minimum of 2 personnel including a qualified Engineer for that apparatus. If there is not a member qualified at the officer level on the brush truck, it will respond with the engine under the direction of the engine officer.

d. **Squad Staffing.** Minimum of 2 personnel.

2. **Higher class.** Higher class will be paid as appropriate when staffing with extra personnel or apparatus.

F. **Alternate shift schedules.** In extreme situations, the Chief of the Department may authorize the use of alternate shift schedules until the emergent situation has passed. Situations that may trigger alternate shift schedules may include a severe loss of regular staffing as well as actual or threatened natural or manmade disasters. Examples of alternate schedules may include the maintenance of the current schedule, but a suspension of leave privileges. It may also include the combination of available shift personnel to operate on a two-shift, 24-on/24-off or 48-on/48-off schedule. Overtime and higher class will be paid where appropriate.