

Federal Fire Fighter Trade Time

The IAFF supports the Federal Firefighter Flexibility and Fairness Act and encourages members of Congress to cosponsor the bill.

BACKGROUND

Typically, municipal fire fighters across the country can swap shifts or trade time and still be paid according to their regular work schedules. Municipal fire fighters who trade time are paid as if they had worked their scheduled shifts. This workplace flexibility gives fire fighters at the state and local level the ability to take time off for family obligations by trading shifts with fellow fire fighters without drawing down their leave.

Unlike their municipal counterparts, federal fire fighters can only trade time within a two-week pay period. Any shift swaps outside a pay period affect the calculation of hours worked and overtime pay. Currently, if two federal fire fighters swap shifts outside of a pay period, one would have his or her weekly pay reduced, while the other fire fighter would earn overtime pay. This can be burdensome and costly to the

federal government. As a result, some federal fire departments simply refuse to allow fire fighters to trade time.

This problem is easily remedied by excluding trade time from the calculation of overtime pay in the federal sector. This would serve as a cost-effective tool to give more leave flexibility to federal fire fighters, while maintaining minimum staffing requirements during potential workforce shortages. Trade time also allows federal agencies to recruit and retain trained fire fighters and boost morale. The Federal Firefighter Flexibility and Fairness Act was crafted by the IAFF to address this inequity by excluding trade time from the calculation of overtime pay for federal fire fighters. This bill provides federal fire fighters the same flexibilities in the workplace as their fellow state and local fire fighters.

LEGISLATION

Senate: [HR 4707, the Federal Firefighter Flexibility and Fairness Act](#)

Sponsors: Representative John Sarbanes (D-MD); Representative Rob Wittman (R-VA)

Summary: The Federal Firefighter Flexibility and Fairness Act would exclude hours worked as part of any trade time arrangement from the calculation of overtime pay for federal fire fighters. The legislation defines “qualified trade-of-time arrangement” as an arrangement between two fire fighters who are employed by the same agency, solely at their option and with the approval of their fire department supervisor, to substitute for one another during the scheduled work hours in the performance of work in the same capacity.