

1/29/14

Questions for Jay Hughes, Dover Fire Chief

Is the Holiday coverage issue a common practice for call departments of the size of Dover's Fire department? Yes, all the departments of a comparable size to Dover have this practice. This practice was originally started in Dover by Pete Sherman.

How is this practice documented? The process begins with a sign-up list that goes up each May and which covers the summer holidays. After the Labor Day holiday, the coverage issue is discussed at each monthly staff meeting. The calendar for the next 90 days is covered.

How did the coverage issue come up initially? The issue of full coverage came up as a part of a recent review of the holidays and the historical practice which confirmed the need for a more defined coverage policy. People covering the station are paid for 8 hours of coverage, rather than for the full 24 hours. However, they are paid for going out to a call.

How does the Department determine who will be asked to commit to each of the covered holidays? The staff is initially asked to sign-up for coverage and the final list is determined by the Lieutenant and Craig, after providing equal time for those who have volunteered.

How far in advance are the individuals asked to commit to the requested coverage? The minimum time is at least 60-90 days.

What happens if an individual's situation changes that prevents coverage on the particular holiday? Who is the one to ask an alternate to commit to the coverage?

The individual who is assigned can try to get a replacement, but must keep either the Lieutenant or Craig informed of the developments. Otherwise, the Lieutenant or Craig will approach one of the other staff for their commitment.

How did you reach the number that four as the appropriate number for the day's coverage? The figure is the minimum number needed to fully staff one truck, normally a Driver, Officer and 2 other people.

How was the original number of holidays chosen? Is it part of the employee contract? For the Fire Department, there is no employee contract. The holiday list initially came from the holidays granted to employees of the Department of Public Works, Parks & Recreation and Town Hall. Additional days can be added to the list depending on the vacation schedule for the staff.

Can you be available for 15-20 minutes to review the Fire Department budget with the arrant Committee on Wednesday, February 26th? Yes, I will attend the arrant Committee meeting on the 6th and be prepared to review my Department's budget beginning at 7:00 PM.