




OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR/FIRE CHIEF

August 22, 2014

INSTRUCTIONAL BULLETIN #14-26

TO: All Fire and Rescue Personnel
FROM: Martin L. Senterfitt, Director/Fire Chief 
RE: **Annual Leave Solutions**

Over the last several months there has been considerable amount of discussion regarding Annual Leave and the difficulty many of you are having in getting a day off. This has prompted the Administration to look into leave usage and the process involved in scheduling a day off. What we discovered was quite surprising:

- One individual submitted 118 leave requests in an 8 ½ month period... and then cancelled 103 of them!
- Fifteen individuals submitted thirty or more requests in a six month period. That equates to 50% of their scheduled shifts.
- One hundred and twenty-three individuals submitted fifteen or more requests in a six month period. That equates to 25% of their scheduled shifts.

As you can see, a small percentage of the department (less than 10%), equates to a large amount of leave requests.

Recently, the Administration and the Union met and came up with what we hope are simple, yet effective solutions to some of the leave issues faced. Below are the key solutions:

- First, limit the total number of outstanding Annual Leave requests any one employee can have at a time to ten. As the employee uses a day, they will then be able to add another day to the leave management system. This will allow more employees to get Annual Leave and limit those who take more than their fair share.



All Fire and Rescue Personnel
INSTRUCTIONAL BULLETIN #14-26
Annual Leave Solutions
August 22, 2014
Page 2

- Second, educate our employees on the impact leave cancellations have on others. Scheduling days off and then cancelling at the last minute is NOT a victimless offense. More than likely, another of your coworkers may have wanted that day off and were denied because the maximum number of Annual Leave slots was taken. Excessive leave cancellations will result in a visit from your Chief.
- Third, focus on the proper use of leave. Much too often I hear how employees are forced to take Sick Leave, when really what they needed was just a day off. As you are all fully aware, excessive Sick Leave usage can lead to discipline. Instead, we have agreed with the Union to try a new approach. We are going to grant an additional two Annual Leaves per day, with the expectation that the average Sick Leave usage will go down by two. If this works, we will continue to add Annual Leave and reduce Sick Leave, until we reach a more reasonable balance. This will reward those who schedule and take leave in the appropriate manner, and help deter Sick Leave abuse.
- Forth, open up Resource Management to allow all personnel to view the leave requests for each day. This will allow everyone to see how many requests have been entered before submitting a request, thereby keeping you from wasting a request on a day that is already overbooked.
- Finally, continue to look for ways to improve the LOA process. After discussing leave with many of you, I have noticed a reoccurring message; many of you only take off when you are unable to get a time swap. It is my hope we can find new and creative ways to assist you in this process, thereby freeing up Annual Leave days for others.

In closing, I would like to take a moment to thank all of you who have taken the time to discuss these issues in a constructive manner, which has added insight and value into creating a solution for the entire department. These changes will not go into effect until the beginning of September, so feel free to continue the brainstorming process and help find solutions. As always, our goal is to improve your work environment and continue to make Jacksonville Fire Rescue the BEST place to fulfill your dreams of serving this community through the Fire and EMS profession.