



For EMS Suppression, in July 2010, (before 14 new recruits were released into the field) overtime hours for minimum staffing was 1,681. In March (with the new recruits released into the field) the overtime hours for minimum staffing decreased to 1,037.

In terms of controlling overtime, there are certain steps that can be taken but there are limitations as well. The Fire Department currently has 38 uniformed "slots" that need to be filled every day for Fire Suppression minimum staffing, and 16 minimum uniformed slots in EMS. When one of these slots is vacant either by annual leave, sick leave, light duty, etc., the slot must be backfilled with minimum staffing overtime.

If overtime is not used, the apparatus is not placed in service and results in reduced coverage in the City. In order to ensure that the overtime problem does not grow, the Department has taken the following steps:

1. Allow only six leave slots per day for Fire and four leave slots per day for EMS. This means that only six and four personnel are authorized to be on annual leave at any point in a day.
2. Reduce sick leave. A new sick leave policy was instituted in 2009 whereby Department personnel are allowed three unscheduled sick leave incidents before going on a Sick Leave Oversight Program. Since calendar 2008, total sick leave hours for uniformed personnel has reduced from 30,648 hours to 18,119 hours in calendar 2010.
3. Revised light duty policy. Working in conjunction with the City's Human Resources Department, the Fire Department instituted a policy that offers employees on light duty for 52 weeks a choice to return to work or be released from employment. Employees are given counseling and offered chances to return to work in their previous capacity.

In addition, the Department incurs overtime for staffing related to emergency events. For instance, the Department upstaffed engines in February 2011 in advance of potential snow storm accidents at morning rush hour. That month, Prince George's and Prince William counties experienced wildfires in which they requested our mutual aid. To protect the City during severe red flag conditions potentially resulting in an urban conflagration, we responded using employees on overtime (these events differ from City-wide emergencies in which all overtime costs are managed centrally).