# The Forty Eight-Ninety Six Work Schedule

A Feasibility Study
Prepared for the Members of
Firefighters Local 522

Prepared by
Engineer/Paramedic Maurice Johnson
Captain Mark Repetto
Captain/Paramedic Barbie Law
Engineer/Paramedic Tracey Valentine

Researched by:

(48/96 Committee Members)

Captain Frank Miranda, Engineer Patrick Callahan, Engineer Chris Nelson, Firefighter Lindie Thomas, Firefighter Jamie Poole, Firefighter Ty Bailey, Firefighter Jon Rudnicki

This document has been amended to reflect the Committees work since being presented to Senior Staff and the General Membership. Any changes are highlighted in yellow.

The following pages have changes to them:

Page(s) 3, 12, 19, and 20

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#### Introduction

In April of 2006 an ad hoc committee comprised of members from the Firefighters Local 522 was convened to research the feasibility, benefits, and challenges of the 48/96 work schedule. The committee is comprised of thirteen members, including captains, engineers, firefighters, and firefighter paramedics. Members of the committee have between 2 and 20 years of service with Metro Fire. The committee also represents a cross-section of personnel from busy and slow stations and both with and without medic units. The committee is led by Engineer/Paramedic Maurice Johnson.

The committee met 14 times, deliberating this issue for 70 hours. Individual committee members also spent countless hours of researching items, contacting other Fire Agencies, verifying data, compiling data, preparing presentations, and document development.

This study shall accomplish the following:

- Clearly define the 48/96 work schedule
- Trace its history in the Fire Service
- Explain how it functions
- Compare it to the current Metro Fire work schedule
- Outline the benefits & drawbacks
- Identify and address any potential challenges

Unlike any committees before, we were challenged with the unique task of developing a proposal based on the above-mentioned goals. The committee had to come to a consensus on these items. While that in itself doesn't seem difficult, please consider the fact that not all committee members shared the same support for the schedule. The committee did, however share the common goal of ensuring that the Membership and Administration would be well educated on the 48/96 work schedule and that all information within this document is fair, balanced, truthful, and verifiable.

In the course of its research, this committee gathered information from many Fire Agencies across the country currently using and/or studying this schedule. Members are encouraged to study the accompanying material and decide for themselves if the 48/96 work schedule is right for them individually, and for the membership as a whole. This committee is now submitting its findings.

### The 48/96 and the Fire Service

According to a study conducted by San Jose Firefighters Local 230, the 48/96 work schedule has been used by professional fire agencies since the early 1990's. Since 1998, over two dozen departments switched to this schedule as a means of relief from long commutes, but also to improve morale by providing more "four days", and more weekends off. As seen on the attached users list, this schedule is not a theoretical experiment in the fire service, but a proven and valid schedule option. The Departments using the schedule are diverse in their demographics, management structure, and overall philosophies.

Most departments that considered the schedule first voted for a six-month or one year trial period. In all cases, an escape clause was added to the agreement to allow labor or management to opt out of the trial period at anytime. This committee does not recommend a trial period unless it includes such an escape clause.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Report A- 48/96 Work Schedule: Special Report to San Jose Firefighters Local 230

## What is a "48/96" work schedule?

A 48/96 work schedule is simply this: each platoon works two consecutive twenty-four (24) hour shifts, for a total of forty-eight (48) hours (tour). Immediately following one (1) tour that platoon would have ninety-six (96) hours off before repeating another pattern of two (2) days on, four (4) days off.

One shift is still considered to be 24 hours. If a firefighter takes a day off, he/she uses 24 hours of vacation leave, and works the remaining 24-hour shift. Personnel would still be allowed to take time off in partial shifts. For example, if a firefighter takes the first half of his/her first shift off, he/she comes in that evening and works out the remaining 36 hours of the tour.

## Example:

Kelly						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>
26	27	28	29	30	31	

This six-day rotation would replace the current 9-day rotation used by our district.

48/96						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

The total number of hours worked per month and per year remains the same.

## Nothing but the Facts

- We work the same number of days with the Metro work schedule and the 48/ 96 work schedule
  - o 56 hours per week
  - o 10 days per month
  - o 120 days per year
- ♣ Tours falling on both Christmas Eve and Christmas day
  - o The 24<sup>th</sup> could be swapped for the 26<sup>th</sup>
  - o This occurs 10 times in 21 years
  - o The first incident occurs in 2009
- 4 Days off duty
  - o 40 per year on the Metro schedule
  - o 60 per year on the 48/96 work schedule
- ♣ Full Weekends off duty
  - 17 weekends off per year on the Metro schedule
  - o 26 weekends off per year on the 48/96 work schedule
- Full Weekends on duty
  - 0 complete weekends worked on the Metro schedule
  - o 9 complete weekends worked per year on the 48/96 work schedule
- Commute Days
  - o 240 commute days per year on the Metro schedule
  - o 120 commute days per year on the 48/96 work schedule
- Commute Summary
  - Mileage to work will be cut in half
  - Less wear and tear on your vehicle
  - Less time driving
  - Reduction in your fuel bill
  - Reduction in air pollution

# Fire Agencies Currently Operating on the 48/96 Work Schedule

At least 80 departments have switched to the 48/96 work schedule or are in the midst of a trial period.<sup>2</sup>

Many more departments are reportedly now conducting feasibility studies of the 48/96 work schedule.

## 48/96 Fire Departments Compared to Metro Fire

The Departments using the schedule are diverse in their demographics, management structure, and overall philosophies, however; no other Department with comparable medic unit hour utilization (UHU) or call volume are utilizing the 48/96 work schedule.

**Sacramento Metro Fire** has 42 stations, protects a population of 600,000, provides ALS and transport services, and responds to over 60,000 calls a year. Ten of Metro Fire's 42 stations run between 300 and 650 calls a month. This equates to between 10 and 22 runs per day.<sup>3</sup>

**Albuquerque Fire** has 21 stations, protects a population of 625,000, provides ALS services with limited transport responsibility, and responds to over 50,000 calls a year. Six of Albuquerque's 21 stations run between 350 and 500 calls a month<sup>4</sup>.

The City of San Bernardino Fire Department has 12 fire stations, protects a population of 180,000 and responds to over 18,200 calls a year. Three of San Bernardino's stations run between 350 and 500 calls a month.<sup>5</sup>

**West Metro Fire-(Colorado)** has 15 fire stations, protects a population of 265,000, and responds to over 20,000 calls a year. West Metro staffs 8 transporting medic units, 3 of which run between 200 and 250 calls per month. <sup>6</sup>

**Elk Grove CSD** has 6 stations, protects a population of 112,000, provides ALS and transporting services and responds to over 8,000 calls per year. <sup>7</sup>

**Folsom Fire Department** has 4 stations, protects a population of 52,000, provides ALS and transporting services and responds to over 5,400 calls per year 3,600 of which are EMS related. <sup>8</sup>

→ Five (5) Metro Fire Medic Units respond to 3600 or more EMS related incidents per year.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Attachment A for a complete list of departments utilizing the 48/96 work schedule.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See Attachment B- Metro Fire Department Fact Sheet & 2005 Run Stats

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Attachment C- Albuquerque Fire Department Fact Sheet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See Attachment D- San Bernardino City Fire Department Fact Sheet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See Attachment K- West Metro Fire Department Fact Sheet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See Attachment E- Elk Grove Community Services District Fire Department Fact Sheet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See Attachment F- Folsom Fire Department Fact Sheet

# What are the benefits to changing to a 48/96?

# Days off and scheduling benefits

- More "four-days"—Since the 48/96 is a more efficient arrangement of days, the number of "four-days" increases to a total of 60 per year from 40 per year currently. There are only two days between four days on the 48/96, rather than 5 days between four days on the Kelly schedule.
- More weekends off—The 48/96 work schedule gives personnel a total of 26 full weekends off per year, versus the current schedule of 17. This equates to more weekends off consecutively. This is a benefit for personnel whose families are involved in weekend activities such as team sports or church services.
- Week- to-week pattern—Under the current schedule, a firefighter will work, three consecutive Mondays in a row and then has 6 off. With the 48/96 work schedule, a firefighter works two consecutive Mondays, then has the next four Mondays off. Again, for those who participate in regular activities such as college courses or sports leagues, this is a significant benefit.
- Increased Morale for those who like the schedule.

## Commute

- Mornings at Home—5 more mornings per month that you will wake up at home, not going to work. This increases the number of mornings a firefighter is home to help take the kids to school or just sleep in.
- Commute Reduction—cuts commutes in half.
- Traffic Reduction: —By implementing the 48/96 work schedule, we will reduce the number of vehicles from congested valley roadways.
- Mileage Reduction— Employees could collectively eliminate an estimated 1.5 million commute miles a year.

# What are the negative aspects of the 48/96 work schedule?

- Personnel will be away from the family for 48 hours:
  - Change in family routine of any kind can be difficult
  - Some members face unique issues in regards to childcare, child custody, and animals, care of an elderly parent or sick family members.
- Difficulty and expense involved with renegotiating child custody
- This schedule requires you to work 61, 48-hour tours. We don't work any now.
- Sleep deprivation and fatigue with potential for negative health consequences.
- o If the first shift is busy, productivity on the second shift could decrease.
- Decreased morale of members who do not want to try the 48/96.
- The 48/96 work schedule requires that personnel work nine full weekends per year. There are currently no full weekends worked on the Kelly schedule.
- Difficult for administration to contact personnel when working Sat./Sun rotation.

#### Telestaff

Telestaff can easily be adapted to the 48/96 work schedule. Other departments on the 48/96 use Telestaff.

#### **Vacation Selection**

The committee recommends no change to the vacation bid process.

## **Christmas Schedule Switch**

During a 21 year period, utilizing the 48/96 work schedule, a shift will be scheduled to work both Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day 10 times. In this case December 24<sup>th</sup> would be swapped with December 26<sup>th</sup>. The first occurrence is in 2009.

# Example:

48/96						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>
26	27	28	29	30	31	

48/96 Christmas Swapped						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>
26	27	28	29	30	31	

# **Staffing**

The proposed work schedule will operate under a District seniority based bid.

- ♣ All apparatus will be bid based on seniority
- ♣ All ALS Engine Companies will require one paramedic assigned. Paramedic can be from the ranks Captain, Engineer or Firefighter
- Specialty equipment bids to be determined by Operations.
- → All fire stations with a full time medic unit shall participate in a rotation. The probationary employee will satisfy this requirement, if one is assigned. For those stations that do not have a probationary employee assigned, the rotation will be determined by the Captain, with assistance from the Battalion Chief.

## Sick Leave and the 48/96 work schedule

With the exception of West Metro Fire Department, the following departments provided sick leave data to the San Jose Fire Department in 2003. West Metro Fire Department's data is from 2006.

- Pacifica Fire Department had a 20% reduction sick leave use after switching to the 48/96 work schedule
- ♣ Minneapolis Fire Department switched to a modified 48/96 work schedule<sup>10</sup> and saw an overall reduction in sick leave use by 34%
- **Manhattan Beach Fire Department** had an 80% reduction in sick leave use after switching to the 48/96 work schedule
- ➡ Half Moon Bay Fire Department had a 10% reduction in sick leave use after switching to the 48/96 work schedule
- **♣ West Metro Fire Department** 28% reduction in 6 months<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See Report B -Minneapolis Fire schedule consists of one shift working a 48/96 with the remaining shifts working a modified Kelly schedule.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See Report A- 48/96 Work Schedule: Special Report to San Jose Firefighters Local 230

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Phone interview- Captain Mark Repetto-Metro Fire with Assistant Chief Armstrong-West Metro Fire

#### **Division Comments**

The 48/96 committee solicited comments from all of the division heads. We wanted to know how support staff felt the schedule change could effect their respective divisions. The division heads were not specifically asked for any concerns or negative feedback. The following are the responses received from the divisions that participated. <sup>12</sup>

#### Fire Chief- Don Mette

- Chiefs from other departments have stated they have difficulty getting people back to work if someone goes home during the shift.
- The District would be negligent and liable if it did not make provision for rest.

## **EMS**

- Assistant Chief Cantelme-Director of EMS, Metro Fire
  - Concerned about relief for personnel assigned to the medics.
  - Mandatory call back could lead to more frequent 72 hour shifts.
  - Intensifies the need for relief for those assigned to the medic
  - The 48/96 may affect field internships. The time needed to precept an intern may have to be extended due to the toggle, fatigue, ALS contacts, etc.
  - I have concern regarding the affects of fatigue and patient care. Will the quality of our patient care decline and will there be an increase in customer complaints due to fatigue and paramedic/EMT demeanor during their interaction with patients and the public?
- Dr. Steve Tharratt-Medical Director, Metro Fire
  - There will need to be policies in place to ensure employees are not working while unduly fatigued. This will have medical/legal implications for the district.

# ♣ Fire Prevention & Investigations

- Deputy Chief Mike Dobson-Director of Fire Prevention Bureau
  - Officer safety (Shift Arson Investigators) declines after extended periods without rest.
  - Working relationships between shift investigators & personnel will be diluted.
  - A USFA study recommends that our peace officers should not work shifts longer than 24 hours. The concern was they would be less attentive (sleepy & tired) and this would be an officer safety issue.
  - Investigation training will take longer to establish & deliver.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See Attachment I- Division email responses

- The shift investigators on 24 hour shifts would develop very strong relationships with their assigned shifts. If investigators were on 24 hour shifts and all other suppression personnel were on a 48 hour shift they will work less together, diluting their exposure to each other.
- When all work a 24-hour shift, the shift investigators on other shifts rarely see other shifts.

# Training

- Assistant Chief David Baltzell-Director of Training
  - This schedule could cause repetitive training for some, and none for others.
  - Training staff is competing with a compressed time frame.
    - 3 day cycle down to 2 day cycle
  - Extended amount of time needed to reach all personnel with mandatory training.
- Assistant Chief Jeff Metzinger-Training
  - If you look at both days of the "48" as equal and available training days - there is no problem.
  - If you remove one day or the other of the "48 " from availability (or non-training days) - then you will need to train on ANY available day - including Saturdays and Sundays. That would be a problem.
    - For example: If E25 goes to a formal drill on the first-half of a 48, they would not likely go to a formal (scheduled) drill the following day - someone else would. As we do now, you go to drill today, and the next shift you're covering so that a neighboring Company goes to drill.
  - There are equal numbers of Monday-Friday days in looking at both schedules. If you leave all Monday-Friday dates available for training - then Saturdays and Sundays remain uncommitted to scheduled training.

# ♣ Risk Management/Safety/Fitness

- Deputy Chief George Appel-Risk Management/Workers Compensation
  - Concerns center around safety of our employees and the public
  - Employees at our busiest stations will not get adequate rest during the period of a 48-hour shift.
  - Concerned that work related injuries & possibly their severity will increase
  - Inadequate training & insufficient sleep are elements that lead to increased & more severe injuries.
  - An injury tracking program could tell us if injuries do increase
  - If 48/96 is implemented we should establish an injuries threshold based on numbers or severity (compared to current time lost per injury) that exceeds our current experience.

- Jack Kastorff, PE, CSP, ARM, ALCM-Risk Manager, Bragg & Associates
  - A tired employee makes poorer decisions than alert one, poorer decisions that can have life or death consequences for all concerned.
  - I would expect that injuries and claims, and workers compensation costs, will be higher with extended work hours.
     Overtime studies show greater injury rates for tired employees.
  - I know of no safety professionals who favor 48/96, and suggest investigation of the motives of anyone stating there are no, or minimal, downsides to 48/96.
- Coach Chris Armstrong-Fitness Program Manager
  - No significant impact on health and fitness training plan.
  - Primary negative would be for those that maintain their fitness exclusively at Metro Fire
    - Increases the difficulty maintaining the appropriate frequency of exercise for optimum fitness
  - Not a deal breaker by any means, however somewhat less than ideal than the present work schedule
  - Have been unable to find any published studies looking specifically at safety and/or performance impacts of a 48/96 schedule

## Staffing

- Mandatory call backs are difficult to fill.
- o People coming off shift fill almost all of MCB.
- A majority of MCB was for partial shifts.
- People coming off shift fill the majority of partial callbacks.
- Knowing the aforementioned information, filling partial & MCB will be difficult on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 24-hour shift of the rotation.

# **Logistics**

Did not feel their operations would be effected by the schedule change

#### Fleet Maintenance

Did not feel their operations would be effected by the schedule change

## Human Resources

Did not feel their operations would be effected by the schedule change

## Operations did not respond

### **Line Personnel Questions/Concerns & Committees Answers**

The committee received numerous questions and comments from line personnel. The committee attempted to research and answer all questions; however, many questions related to one's personal situation and would have to be decided based on an individual's feelings and beliefs. A complete list of questions and comments can be found on Attachment L.

**Health Effects**<sup>13</sup> – Sleep deprivation can be an issue on both the 48/96 work schedule and Kelly schedule.

- By nature, humans are diurnal: active during the day & sleep at night.
- Shift work upsets this natural order, & our bodies never completely adapt to the change.
  - A shift worker is anyone who follows a work schedule that is outside of the typical "9 to 5" business day.
- **♣ Sleep deprivation** is an overall lack of the necessary amount of sleep.
- ♣ The amount of sleep needed varies from person-to-person.
  - o Adults age 16-65 need 6-9 hours of sleep per night.
  - Even the loss of a couple of hours a night can negatively affect health.
- ♣ The effects on the brain of inadequate sleep include:
  - Drop in concentration levels
  - Impaired memory
  - Mental reaction time slows
  - Speech becomes fragmented
  - Problem solving ability is greatly impaired
  - Emotional mood deteriorates
- The physical effects of sleep deprivation include:
  - Difficulty in focusing the eyes
  - Difficulty performing fine motor functions
  - Muscle strength & endurance drops
  - Appetite tends to increase leading to weight gain
  - Compromised immune system with greater than normal chance of infection
  - Increased risk of breast cancer
  - Lowered glucose metabolism
  - Increased risk of coronary artery disease
- Sleep deprivation leads to fatigue.
- ♣ Fatigue can be defined as a state of diminished physical and/or mental efficiency.
- As fatique progresses
  - Errors of omission increase
  - Followed by errors of commission
  - Followed by micro sleeps

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> See Attachment M

- A micro sleep is an involuntary sleep lapse lasting from a few seconds to a few minutes.
  - < 4 hours sleep per night causes uncontrolled micro sleep attacks</li>
  - People who experience micro sleeps usually remain unaware of them.
     Usually occurs during hazardous activities such as driving or operating equipment.
- ♣ Fatigue can cause uncontrolled and involuntary shut down of the brain.
  - Regardless of how hard you try
  - Professionalism
  - Training level of the employee
- ♣ Fatigue related detriments are similar to those caused by alcohol.
  - 19 hours of wakefulness equals the mental & performance level of a legally drunk driver in most states (.08 blood alcohol concentration).
- Fatigue is a major contributor to accidents, lost productivity, and poor quality of life.
- Common misconceptions:
  - o "I've lost sleep before and been fine."
  - "I'm motivated enough to push through it"
- Sleep is a physical necessity, not a luxury.
  - o There is NO substitute for SLEEP!

# **Additional Findings**

# What were departments' motivation for a schedule change?

Most of the fire departments' membership were motivated by the reduction in commuting and the fact that employees could spend more time at home with their families. A number of departments chose to switch as a means of attracting and maintaining employees. Many departments changed because they saw the positive benefits and improvements in morale in surrounding departments who had switched to the 48/96 work schedule.

In all cases it was Labor who brought the idea to their department for consideration.

# Was the 48/96 work schedule implemented on a trial basis?

All departments implementing the schedule did it for a 6-month or 1-year trial period. In all cases, language was included to allow labor or management to opt out of the trial period at any time (escape clause).

## **Voting Process**

An electronic vote will be utilized as the official medium to decide if the membership wishes to initiate a seniority based 48/96 work schedule with a one year trial period to begin tentatively on January 1, 2008. An absentee ballot will be made available by request to those parties who do not wish to vote electronically, or who will not be physically able to vote electronically. The Local will be informed of the outcome of the vote.<sup>14</sup> A 2/3 majority vote is required.

At the end of the 1-year trial, a 2<sup>nd</sup> vote shall be conducted. If successful, the 48/96 work schedule shall be installed permanently January 1, 2009 and will be considered as the new Metro Fire work schedule.

#### "No More" Clause

If the vote is not in favor of implementing the 48/96 work schedule. The membership will not entertain the 48/96 work schedule again for the life of the MOU during which the trial period has been initiated. This clause will also apply to any votes or polls (formal or informal).

## What does a "YES" vote mean?

If you vote "YES" you will be voting in favor of a seniority based 48/96 work schedule with a one year trial period to begin tentatively January1, 2008.

## What does a "NO" vote mean?

If you vote "NO", you are **NOT** in favor of initiating the 48/96 work schedule, and thus invoking the "**NO MORE**" clause.

#### **Escape Clause**

The 48/96 work schedule shall have an escape clause built in as a safety measure. An escape clause would allow any of the involved parties, i.e. Local 522 or Administration to cancel the schedule change and revert back to the Kelly schedule at any time. This clause shall apply to the trial period and any subsequent implementation of the 48/96 work schedule.

#### Conclusion:

The change to a 48/96 work schedule may constitute a significant life change for the membership. There are many factors to consider before making a decision. It is incumbent upon each of us to take the time to do our own research & decide if this change will be beneficial for the long term. It will be up to each individual to cast a vote in support of the schedule that best fits his or her lifestyle.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> See Attachment J- Sample Absentee Ballot

## Recommendation

It is the recommendation of this committee for Administration and the Local to approve and support this document and authorize the committee to conduct a vote. Furthermore, it is the recommendation of the committee that this document shall be followed as a guideline for implementing the subsequent trial if the vote is successful. If the vote is in favor of the 48/96 work schedule, the committee shall stay convened to manage the trial, collect data, conduct the 2<sup>nd</sup> vote, and draft the subsequent final report and recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted,	
Engineer/Paramedic Maurice Johnson Committee Chair	Firefighter/Paramedic Jamie Poole Committee Vice Chair
Engineer/Paramedic Tracey Valentine Committee Secretary	Captain/Paramedic Barbie Law
Captain Frank Miranda	Captain Mark Repetto
Engineer/Paramedic Patrick Callahan	Engineer/Paramedic Chris Nelson
Firefighter Lindie Thomas	Firefighter/Paramedic Ty Bailey
Firefighter/Param	edic Jon Rudnicki