

TO: First Responder Community

FROM: Christopher Herrick, Director, Vermont Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

DATE: October 1, 2015

SUBJECT: State of Vermont Policy for Payment for First Responders' Attendance to DEMHS sponsored Training and Exercises

It is a statewide goal that all first responders participate to the maximum extent possible in all organized training and exercises. It has been recognized that first responders have a difficult time attending training and exercises due to daytime commitments relating to their employment. Although much effort has been taken to include all first responders in Vermont it has been noted that many have not attended training and exercises due to the financial burdens placed on them when they leave their jobs. It is therefore the policy of the Vermont Homeland Security Unit to set a statewide policy, as outlined in Homeland Security Office of Domestic Preparedness Informational Bulletin 141 and 157. This policy shall take effect immediately, replacing the previous payment policy, and will apply to training and exercise participation in all fiscal grant years. The policy set forth shall be for all first responders that attend Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) sponsored training and exercises.

FULL TIME PERSONNEL: First responders employed in a full time status of an Agency shall continue to receive the rate of time and one-half when attending training and exercises for their organization if required by their contractual law. The agency will be paid for overtime if the attendee is on a scheduled day off, OR the agency will be paid for backfill expenses to cover the portion of the schedule that encompasses the training or exercise and travel time for the training or exercise only for that attendee if the attendee is on a regularly scheduled work day. Neither overtime nor backfill expenses are the result of an increase of Full-Time Equivalent employees and what is allowable is the equivalent of reimbursement of 1 full time employee. For example, if one of the members that is attending the exercise or training is regularly scheduled to work, then the individual department will pay for that person to attend the exercise or training. However, the grant will reimburse the department to backfill that position. If the person has a scheduled day off on any or all of the days of the exercise or training, then the grant will reimburse for the overtime incurred.

If the person attending the training or exercise is on a scheduled shift and the training or exercise falls within that shift time frame, and that shift encompasses more than the scheduled training or exercise time, it is expected that person will complete his or her shift and the grant will not reimburse for the non training or exercise portion of the expense. In those cases where trainings or exercises are conducted outside of Vermont, then full shift coverage will be determined on a case by case basis, with advance approval by DEMHS necessary. Under no circumstances will an Agency be reimbursed for 24-hours of coverage, for overtime or backfill.

Reimbursement for mileage will also be considered on a case by case basis with prior approval by DEMHS.

PART-TIME PERSONNEL: If an agency has budgeted employees to work less than a full time schedule, the time that these employees spend traveling to and attending DEMHS sponsored training and exercises above and beyond their regularly scheduled hours can be considered overtime and therefore covered. For example, if an agency budgets an individual for 20 hours per week, but DEMHS sponsored training and/or exercise activities require that person to work 25 hours in a week, the additional 5 hours spent in training and/or exercise may be covered by DEMHS grants. With regards to out of state trainings or exercises, and mileage the same policy as mentioned above will apply.

In order to receive reimbursement for the above expenses, agencies must first submit a completed DPS GMU-202w Application. Once approved, a grant agreement will be issued and executed by DPS and only then may expenses be submit for reimbursement, utilizing the Vermont Department of Public Safety Financial Report Form and the backup documentation as detailed in the executed grant agreement.