LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Leave for control room staff

New policy number:	**48**
Old instruction number:	**CRN008**
Issue date:	**1 September 1992**
Reviewed as current:	**7 August 2026**
Owner:	**Assistant Commissioner, Operational Resilience and Control**
Responsible work team:	**Control and Mobilising**

Contents

1 Introduction 2
2 Leave 2
3 Allocation of leave 2
4 Christmas holiday leave arrangements for watch-based staff 4
5 Christmas holiday leave arrangements for Control day staff 4
6 Carry over leave 5
7 Anticipation 5
8 Sickness and leave entitlement 5
9 Mutual exchange of duty 6
Appendix 1 – Leavers/joiners pro rata table 7
Appendix 2 - An example of the defined Christmas period, confirmed by the Brigade in December of each year 8
Document history 9

1 Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out the terms and conditions for leave for Control room staff. It should be noted that the granting of leave is contingent on the exigencies of the Brigade's service and accordingly, the giving of adequate notice for leave requests is required.

2 Leave

2.1 Leave runs from 1 April each year to 31 March in the following year.

2.2 Joining and leaving; leave entitlement will be pro-rata (appendix a) for both shift-based and day-based staff on the basis of each complete month of service up to the end of the current leave year. The annual leave entitlement will not, in any event, be less than the statutory leave entitlement. All entitlements listed below are for full time staff. Part time and flexi-working staff entitlements will be pro-rata as appropriate.

Annual leave

- All full-time watch-based control staff are entitled to 256 hours annual leave.
- All full-time day-based staff are entitled to 182 hours or 26 days annual leave.
- All staff are entitled to statutory public holidays or days in lieu.

Long service leave

2.3 Where control room staff have previous service with another recognised public authority, such service will be taken into account in calculating entitlement to long service leave, unless there is a break in service of more than 12 months. Leave entitlement based on length of service is granted as follows:

- After 5 years' service - 1 day
- After 10 years' service - 2 days
- After 15 years' service - 3½ days
- After 20 years' service - 5 days
- After 25 years' service - 7 days

New technology leave

- ½ day – Staff must be in post as of 31 March to accrue for the next leave year.

3 Allocation of leave

Watch-based staff including CORE Team

3.1 Leave will be granted subject to the exigencies of the service and to ensure adequate staff cover is being maintained. All leave on watch will be granted if within leave allocation and in accordance with **Requesting leave** (see below).

3.2 Special leave requests will be dealt with in line with Policy number 512 - Special leave and public duties leave.

3.3 Numbers absent on leave - The number of personnel in each watch who will be permitted to take leave of any type at any one time will be as follows:

Watch establishment	No of personnel permitted leave
16	4

No more than two supervisory members of staff are permitted on leave within this allocation.

3.4 CORE team – number absent on leave – the number of personnel on each watch who will be permitted to take leave of any type at any one time will be as follows:

Watch establishment	No of personnel permitted leave
3	1

3.5 The foregoing limits may only be exceeded:

- Where a new entrant has leave commitments which have previously been agreed by a senior manager.
- For voluntarily transferring staff, following promotion or a transfer request, all previously agreed leave that falls within the first three months of their transfer will be honoured. All authorised leave from the 4th month will need to be reauthorised within their new watch allocation.
- For all staff who are compulsory transferring watch, all previously granted leave will be honoured.

3.6 Leave requested in advance will be for whole shifts only. Part shifts can be requested on the day of the duty if leave falls within the leave allocation and/or more than 11 staff are on duty for the shift/s.

Operations support team - day-based staff

3.7 Leave will be granted subject to the requirement to maintain the training function and to ensure adequate staff cover is being maintained to achieve this. All leave will be granted if within leave allocation detailed below and requested 24 hours or more before the leave date.

3.8 Special leave requests will be dealt with in line with Policy number 512 - Special leave and public duties leave policy.

3.9 Numbers absent on leave - The number of OST staff who will be permitted to take leave of any type at any one time, this includes rota leave, will be three.

Requesting leave

3.10 For each leave year, the process for the allocation of leave requests will commence on or before 16 October of the preceding year. At this time watch members will be asked to submit their primary choices for the following year. When this process is concluded, ad hoc leave requests can be submitted as per the conditions outlined below. The process will be concluded no later than 1 January.

3.11 Employees are advised not to commit themselves to any holiday arrangements until the period of leave has been authorised by their supervisory team or line manager.

3.12 For on watch Control room staff, the supervisory team should normally review and respond to leave applications by the next tour of duty. For day-based staff, the line manager should normally review and respond to leave applications within three working days.

3.13 Leave will be added to StARs at the time that it is granted.

3.14 Short Notice Leave – Short notice leave, is leave requested by an individual for their next duty when their own watch is on rota leave at the time of the request.

3.15 Requests for short notice leave will be granted if the request falls within leave allocation numbers and target staffing numbers are maintained. Overtime can be sought to achieve this.

3.16 In exceptional circumstances, where an individual watch establishment allow and the circumstances are outside of those prescribed above, the provision of short notice leave can be sought in agreement with the duty BCSC.

4 Christmas holiday leave arrangements for watch-based staff

4.1 The Christmas leave period changes every year and is confirmed via a communications message to all staff in the December. The period commences from the first non-working day until the last non-working day, as defined. An example of the table outlining the Christmas period, provided by the Brigade, can be found in Appendix 1.

4.2 The process for requesting Christmas leave will start at the beginning of September and in normal circumstances will be concluded by 15 October each year.

4.3 Control commanders will be responsible for ensuring equality in the fair and consistent application of granting leave for this period.

4.4 At the discretion of the Brigade and subject to the exigencies of the service, the provision of two additional days leave may be granted each year for the holiday period. The particular arrangements for each year shall be identified and notified annually in line with historic Staff Code provisions.

4.5 Additional Control leave days are not bank holidays although may be recorded or credited as PH for technical/system reasons; they are effectively non-attendance days awarded by the Brigade. Therefore, staff performing overtime on these dates will be paid at normal overtime rates for a weekday duty. Staff working duty days on these dates will not receive any additional payments.

4.6 The provisions above for Control PHs additional leave days over the Christmas/New Year period may be subject to review by the appropriate joint committee on receipt of three months' notice from either side of the Committee.

5 Christmas holiday leave arrangements for Control day staff

5.1 At the discretion of the Brigade and subject to the exigencies of the service, the provision of two additional days leave may be granted each year for the holiday period. The particular arrangements for each year shall be identified and notified annually in line with historic Staff Code provisions. An example of the table issued each year can be found in Appendix 1.

5.2 The arrangements for these additional leave days over the Christmas to New Year holiday period shall be on the following conditions:

- Employees must use a day's leave from their current entitlement, to cover absence on one of the days, as specified in the published "Christmas Leave Arrangements" on Hotwire.
- Part-time and flexi-working staff must use leave from their current entitlement, to cover absence on one of the days pro-rated in respect of their singular arrangements.
- The remaining days of excused attendance for the year in question, which would otherwise normally be worked, shall be additional Christmas leave with pay.
- Except as already provided in association with rostered shift work, or work on public holidays weekends or on other days not forming part of the normal working week, attendance for duty on any day over the Christmas and New Year holiday period, shall be compensated for by the granting of equivalent time off in lieu to be taken at a time to be mutually agreed, subject to the exigencies of the service, and shall not attract overtime rates of pay.

- Employees who are not rostered, sick or otherwise absent on days on which these additional leave dates apply shall not be allowed equivalent time off, nor additional payment in lieu.

5.3 The provisions above for Control PHs additional leave days over the Christmas/New Year period may be subject to review by the appropriate joint committee on receipt of three months' notice from either side of the Committee.

6 Carry over leave

6.1 Leave may be carried over into the new leave year on the following basis:

(i) Employees should ensure that they take their leave allocation by the end of the leave year subject to section/departmental/organisational needs. Five days leave (annual and/or long service), or the equivalent in hours, may be carried over into the next leave taking year, but it should be borne in mind that leave not taken by the end of June will be forfeited.

(ii) In exceptional circumstances, where the Brigade Control Senior Management Team accept that leave cannot be taken during the leave year on account of service needs, up to a maximum of an additional five days may be carried over into the next leave year subject to the concurrence of the Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Control, to be used by the end of July, leave not taken by then will be forfeited. This may be granted in addition to 6.1 (i) above.

6.2 Carried over leave not taken within the above time frames shall be lost.

7 Anticipation

7.1 Annual leave (AL) may be anticipated by an employee for personal reasons, not exceeding six days/shifts, subject to the approval of the Deputy Assistant Commissioner Control.

8 Sickness and leave entitlement

8.1 Employees should be aware that extended periods of sickness absence covering more than one leave year may affect their contractual leave entitlement. Following periods of extended absence, leave entitlement will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis as appropriate. Statutory leave entitlement will not be affected.

8.2 A member of staff who becomes ill or is injured at the beginning of, or during a period of leave may be entitled to claim this back if they were ill or incapacitated provided that they:

- Inform their line manager of their illness or injury promptly, in line with normal sickness reporting procedures.
- Provide a fit note, or other formal medical certification, covering the full period of their illness or incapacity.

8.3 Following a period of long-term sickness absence an employee may request to take any outstanding annual leave and should endeavour to take this in the same year in which it was accrued. This will be facilitated by the Brigade as far as possible. However, where the outstanding leave cannot be taken, the Brigade shall allow the employee to carry forward statutory leave into the next holiday year. Please note that this statutory leave (up to 28 days including PH's) must be taken up to eighteen months from the end of the leave year in which it is accrued.

8.4 If an employee is on sick leave on a shift commencing on any of the public holidays they will not be entitled to the equivalent time off or additional payment in lieu.

9 Mutual exchange of duty

9.1 Exchanges of duty between members of watches in Brigade Control will be allowed under the following conditions:

9.2 Exchanges of duty for a whole shift will be granted when normal leave arrangements cannot be made and leave is required.

9.3 No person is, as a result of an exchange of a whole shift, to perform two consecutive shifts.

9.4 The two persons exchanging duties are to be of the same rank, or have the ability to perform the other's role (e.g. OIC)

9.5 The responsibility for identifying individuals willing to exchange duties rests with the person requiring the exchange.

9.6 An application for an exchange of duties is to be made via email to the two relevant Control commanders requesting the exchange and detailing each party's involvement. This request should be submitted for approval by the close of the preceding duty prior to the exchange duty required, at the latest. However, in exceptional circumstances short notice requests will be considered by the duty Control commander.

9.7 Once an exchange of shifts has been agreed by two persons and approved by the appropriate Control commander the individuals are committed to attend those duties. Should they wish to withdraw from the agreed exchange this must be by mutual agreement/acceptance and the respective Control commander must be advised accordingly.

9.8 An exchange of duties for a whole shift effectively means the staff involved are now attached to the appropriate watch for that duty (StARS will reflect this). Subsequent absenteeism is therefore to be managed in the normal manner (sickness or leave).

9.9 Individuals performing exchanged shifts will assume all responsibilities and undertake the duties of the person they have exchanged duties with. This includes if the person is absent through sickness at the time of the exchange.

9.10 Additional time that is worked as a result of an exchange of shift cannot be claimed as overtime.

Appendix 1 – Leavers/joiners pro rata table

Control Watch Staff	1st to 10th	11th to 20th	21st to end of month
April	256	249	242
May	235	228	220
June	213	206	199
July	192	185	178
August	171	164	156
September	149	142	135
October	128	121	114
November	107	100	92
December	85	78	71
January	64	57	50
February	43	36	28
March	21	14	7

Control Day Staff	1st to 10th	11th to 20th	21st to end of month
April	182	177	172
May	167	162	157
June	152	147	142
July	137	131	126
August	121	116	111
September	106	101	96
October	91	86	81
November	76	71	66
December	61	56	51
January	46	40	35
February	30	25	20
March	15	10	5

Appendix 2 - An example of the defined Christmas period, confirmed by the Brigade in December of each year

(Example shows December 2022)

Dates	Control day duties	Control shift duties
Friday 23 December	Working day	
Saturday 24 December Christmas Eve	Non-working day	
Sunday 25 December Christmas Day	Non-working day	Public Holiday
Monday 26 December	Public Holiday	Public Holiday
Tuesday 27 December	Public Holiday	
Wednesday 28 December	Leave day to be taken	
Thursday 29 December	EA (convert to PH)	
Friday 30 December	EA (convert to PH)	
Saturday 31 December	Non-working day	
Sunday 1 January	Non-working day	Public Holiday
Monday 2 January	Public Holiday	
Tuesday 3 January	Working day	

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	21/03/2023	SDIA	**L** - 23/02/2024	HSWIA	22/02/2024	RA	NA

Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Reviewed as current. Changes made as shown below.	07/05/2010
Page 2 Para 1.1	"26 working days" changed to "256 hours".	07/05/2010
Page 2 Para 2.2 and 2.3	Rewritten, please read through to familiarise yourself with the changes in content.	07/05/2010
Page 2	The term "control officers" has been replaced by "control room officers" in line with current role titles.	03/12/2010
Page 1	The title of this policy has been amended to differentiate it from the other leave policies.	23/08/2011
Page 1	Updated the owner from Head of Operations and Mobilising to Head of Mobilising.	09/07/2012
Page 1	Typographical changes to section 1.2. In section 1.3, watch establishment, leave allocation figures and arrangements amended to reflect changes through recent staffing agreements.	02/06/2014
Page 3	Subject list and FOIA exemptions tables.	28/10/2014
Page 2	Inclusion of sign posting to the special leave policy. Inclusion of information relating to the booking of short notice leave.	16/08/2017
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current with no changes made.	20/07/2020
Throughout	Changes made throughout, please read through to familiarise yourself with the content. Reviewed as current.	27/02/2024
Page 5	Section 9 added to incorporate deleted policy - PN0330 - Mutual exchange of duty by control staff.	10/04/2024
Page 5 Para 8.3	Owing to a legislative change the wording 'fifteen months' has been changed to 'eighteen months'.	14/01/2025
Page 2 and 3	Wording change to reflect organisational pro rata leave allocation changes and inclusion of the CORE team leave allocation. Inclusion of table appendix 1 to include pro rata annual leave.	07/08/2026

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Control room	Employment
Leave	

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	**FOIA exemption**	**Security marking classification**