

48/96 Work Schedule

Special Report to Roseville Firefighters Local 1592

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Introduction

The **48/96** work schedule consists of ***two consecutive twenty-four shifts on duty, followed by four consecutive twenty-four hour shifts off duty.*** (Sample calendars attached)

The current Roseville Fire Department schedule will hereafter be referred to as the **Kelly** schedule.

48/96 XX0000 Repeat

Kelly X0X0X0000 Repeat

X = 24 hour shift on duty, 0 = 24 hours off duty.

Over the last decade a growing number of fire departments have changed from the Kelly schedule to the 48/96 schedule. Brian Schwalbe, Jim Bryla, Josh Roten and Ben Dominguez formed a work group to investigate all of the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the 48/96 schedule for **labor** and **management**. Rick Edgar was advised of our intentions and consulted on the union's concerns. We developed a standard questionnaire and surveyed 28 fire departments currently using the 48/96 schedule. At least one representative from management and one member from labor were contacted at each department (names and phone numbers available on request).

After carefully considering all of the information, it is our humble opinion that the 48/96 schedule is very desirable, offers many known benefits and should be presented to our membership. The following is a summary of our findings.

History of the 48/96 Schedule

The idea was probably first borrowed from the Kern County Fire Department which uses a 48 hour Kelly type work schedule. Firefighters in Southern California unable to afford housing where they worked were faced with long commutes. They developed the 48/96 schedule as a way to cut their commute days in half. However, after several years of experience, departments working the 48/96 schedule found there were many other benefits for both labor and management beyond the reduction in commuting. The 48/96 schedule is becoming increasingly popular in Southern California, the San Francisco Bay area and the Lake Tahoe basin. We know of at least 40 fire departments currently using the 48/96 schedule and at least 7 others actively pursuing the change. There are probably more. We know of no departments that changed from 48/96 to a different schedule.

Fire Agencies currently on the 48/96 Schedule

Larkspur	Manhattan Beach
Burlingame	Redondo Beach
San Mateo	Hermosa Beach
San Mateo County	Torrance
Hillsborough	La Verne
Millbrae	South Pasadena
Brisbane	Auburn City
Pacifica	Tahoe Douglas
Half Moon Bay	North Lake Tahoe
Foster City	North Tahoe
Menlo Park	Truckee
South San Francisco	Squaw Valley
Sausalito	Northstar
San Bernardino City	Donner Summit
Colton	Lake Valley
Hesperia	*Inglewood
Barstow	*Hawthorne
Victorville	*Gardena
Atwater	*Covina
Ebbits Pass	*El Segundo

*These fire departments adopted the 48/96 schedule about 5-6 years ago but were recently absorbed by the Los Angeles County Fire Department as contract cities. Sources indicated the Los Angeles County Fire Department might be researching the 48/96 schedule because of the positive experiences of these departments.

Fire Agencies Actively Investigating the 48/96 Schedule

South Placer
Woodside
Corte Madera
Culver City
Stockton
Carson City
Los Angeles County

48/96 Schedule Mechanics

The 48/96 schedule consists of ***two consecutive twenty-four shifts on duty, followed by four consecutive twenty-four hour shifts off duty.***

48/96 and Kelly Schedules are both:

- • 3 Platoon, **ABC**
- • 56 hours per week
- • 112 hours per pay period
- • 121 shifts per year

Kelly

- • 9 day work cycle
- • Rotation jumps ahead 2 days each cycle: Monday/Wednesday/Friday, Wednesday/Friday/Sunday...
- • For a given day, example Monday: work 3 consecutive Mondays, off next 6 consecutive Mondays

48/96

- • 6 day work cycle
- • Rotation falls back a day each cycle: Thursday/Friday, Wednesday/Thursday, Tuesday/Wednesday...
- • For a given day, example Monday: work 2 consecutive Mondays, off next 4 consecutive Mondays

Schedules Compared (annual averages)

Four Days Off

Kelly

- • 40 per year

48/96

- • 60 per year
- • **20 more** (50% increase)

Sleep In Days (not traveling to work)

Kelly

- • 3 of every 9
- • 120 per year

48/96

- • 3 of every 6
- • 180 per year
- • **60 more** (50% increase)

Schedules Compared (annual averages)

Weekend Rotation

Kelly

Sat / Sun.

X O
X O
X O
O O
O O
O X
O X
O X
O O

Repeat

48/96

Sat / Sun.

O X
X X
X O
O O
O O
O O

Repeat

X = 24 hour shift on duty, 0 = 24 hours off duty.

Complete Weekends Off

Kelly

- • 3 out of 9
- • 17 per year

48/96

- • 3 out of 6
- • 26 per year
- • **9 more** (50% increase)

Work One Weekend Day (Sat or Sun)

Kelly

- • 35 per year

48/96

- • 17 per year
- • **18 less** (50% reduction)

Work Both Saturday and Sunday

Kelly

- • None

48/96

- • 9 per year

Stated another way:

Kelly

- ○ 1/3 weekends free, 2/3 tied up working at least one day

48/96

- ○ 1/2 **weekends free**, 1/2 tied up working one or more days

Schedules Compared

Annual Vacation Usage (maximum consecutive days off)

	Kelly	48/96
1 shift leave =	6 days off	5 days off
2 shifts leave =	8 days off	10 days off
3 shifts leave =	13 days off	11 days off
4 shifts leave =	15 days off	16 days off
6 shifts leave =	22 days off	22 days off
7 shifts leave =	24 days off	23 days off
8 shifts leave =	26 days off	28 days off
9 shifts leave =	31 days off	29 days off
10 shifts leave =	33 days off	34 days off
11 shifts leave =	35 days off	35 days off
12 shifts leave =	40 days off	40 days off

An employee using 12 shifts of annual leave (not consecutively)

Kelly

- • Taking them in groups of three shifts off (1 work cycle)
- • 4 x 13 days off = 52 days off

48/96

- • Taking them in groups of two shifts off (1 work cycle)
- • 6 x 10 days off = **60 days off**
- • **2 shifts leave = 1 long week = 10 days off.** Think spring break:
Fri / Sat / Sun / Mon / Tues / Wed / Thurs / Fri / Sat / Sun

Maximum leave needed for Monday – Friday off

(Example: teaching / attending a SFM class)

Kelly

- 3 shifts of leave needed
- Monday / Wednesday / Friday

- • **2 shifts leave needed**
- • Mon / Tues. or
Tues / Wed or ...

48/96

Kelly

- • 120 Commutes

- • **60 Commutes**
(50% reduction)

48/96

Based on 30 minute, 20 mile one way commute:

- ▪ Personal yearly savings: 60 hour of driving (2&1/2 days), 2500 miles, 166 gallons of gasoline, lower insurance costs
- ▪ Less pollution and possible incentives to employees for meeting City of Roseville rideshare goals

Survey Findings

1. 1. How long has your department been using the 48/96 schedule?

Four departments just completed their 1-year trial period. About half have been on the schedule 4-6 years. One department has worked it for 11 years, another for more than 20 years.

2. 2. What schedule were you working before the change?

In all cases the departments had previously been working the Kelly schedule.

3. 3. How did the change come about?

The original departments were motivated by the reduction in commuting. Once one department in an area changed to the 48/96 schedule, the surrounding departments learned of the benefits first hand by personal testimonials from fellow firefighters. In all cases it was a member(s) from labor who brought the idea to their department for consideration.

Progressive departments broke away from the “we have always done it this way” mindset and agreed to try the schedule on a trial basis. In every case where the 48/96 schedule was tried; management and labor have embraced the change.

4. 4. Did labor and management meet inside or outside of negotiations?

About half of the departments met outside of negotiations to discuss 48/96 as a separate issue. The other half discussed 48/96 as part of their normal negotiations. In all cases, labor was **not charged** by management to make the change.

5. 5. Was the 48/96 schedule implemented on a trial basis?

All but two departments implemented a 1-year trial period. Two departments implemented a six-month trial period. In all cases, language was included to allow labor or management the option to end the trial period at any time. No departments exercised this clause.

6. 6. Was there a membership vote before and / or after the trial period?

In all cases, members voted to approve a trial period. In all cases, members voted again after the trial period to adopt the 48/96 schedule. One department used an intermediate vote at 6 months to extend the trial period an additional 6 months before a final vote at 1 year.

7. 7. What was the percent in favor for each vote?

In all cases, a simple majority was needed to approve a trial period. Votes for the trial period ranged from 52% to 84% in favor. The final votes to adopt the schedule at the end of the 1-year trial period ranged from 90% to 100% in favor. Only two were below 90%, one at 80% and one at 75%. **In every case, the percent in favor was much higher on the second vote.** Many of the members we interviewed for this survey (from labor and management) initially voted against the trial period. All of them have since become advocates of 48/96. Many have offered to speak to our membership. **Every department who completed a trial period voted to adopt the 48/96 schedule!** Several departments conducted follow-up surveys and votes after the 48/96 schedule was adopted. In every case, members voted overwhelmingly to continue the 48/96 schedule.

8. 8. What are the positive benefits of the 48/96 schedule?

- • **Higher moral at work**

This is supported by the high percentage of vote approval. Improved moral was a comment we heard over and over. Employees are well rested after 4 days off and are eager to come to work. Employees felt more productive and better organized on duty. Fewer transitions between shifts made for less duplication, better communication and more operational continuity. Along with improved quantity and quality of personal time, members have a greater sense of well being. (See comments on the 3-month evaluation forms from the La Verne Fire Department, attached).

- • **Increased productivity and project follow through on duty**

More flexibility in scheduling daily work schedules over two days. Tools and materials can be left out to continue into the next day. Members with program responsibilities can leave paperwork on their desk to work on for two days. Follow-up meetings and phone calls easier to make on the second day.

- • **Better communication between shifts**

Fewer transitions between shifts mean more continuity day to day. Less lost information at shift exchanges.

- • **Less duplication of work**

The same personnel are on duty the first and second shift. Example: Shopping for food can be done once on the first shift for both days. This leaves more time for cleaning problem areas or special maintenance projects.

- • **Higher quality family / personal time**

Members have many more opportunities to connect with family and friends on a Monday-Friday schedule. More weekends with family and friends, more mornings free to help get the kids to school, etc.

- • **More Weekends Off**

Members with children in school or a spouse that works Monday- Friday find this feature especially appealing. Half of the weekends are free for sports activities, travel etc.

- • **More Four days off**

Every time you go home, you go home to a 4-day. More opportunities for home projects, travel, camping, etc.

- • **Increased productivity at home**

A member building a house can get a lot more done in four consecutive days off vs. every other day. Projects can be left out to continue into the next day. More mornings for an early start on projects.

- • **Less family / personal issues at work**

The comment that sums this up best is that “48/96 separates work from home”. More high quality time at home to deal with personal issues, “happy wife = happy life!”

- • **More choices on where to live**

With commutes cut in half members may choose to live further away. More choices of affordable housing. More opportunities to live in God’s country.

9. 9. What are the negative aspects of the 48/96 schedule?

- • **Away from family for 48 hours**

This was one of the biggest **perceived** concerns from those members who were originally opposed to 48/96. Most members, if honest, will admit they will readily work 48, 72 or 96 hours on overtime. After working the 48/96 schedule, most members found their concerns about being away from the family unfounded or much less significant than they originally thought. The benefits of the **greater amounts of high quality family time** (more weekends, four-days, mornings) more than compensated for being away 48 hours. (See the comments on the 3-month surveys from La Verne Fire, attached).

- • **Fatigue**

Another **perceived** concern by members initially opposed to 48/96. Again, most members will gladly volunteer to work 48, 72 or 96 hours on overtime. The fact is there are going to be times when you could be up all night on the first shift and / or the second shift. After working 48/96, all of the departments we surveyed reported that fatigue was not nearly the problem they originally perceived it to be. Most company officers have the discretion to make adjustments to work schedules if a company has been up all night the previous shift. Based on 2001 statistics, the Roseville Fire Department averages 1.81 incidents per day between 12:00 am and 6:00 am (See attached chart)

- • **Co-workers live further away**

As members may move / live further away there is less socialization off duty. Attendance at union functions may suffer.

- • **May complicate personal issues**

Some members face unique issues of childcare, child custody, care of an elderly parent or sick family member. These can be difficult and challenging issues under any circumstances. Any change in scheduling may cause stress and anxiety. It is reassuring to hear that most families with these issues do find acceptable alternatives when they switch to 48/96. For many, working 48/96 improved their situation, in that it made them available on more weekends when childcare & elder care is more difficult to find.

- • **Shifts falling on December 24 & 25**

There is the possibility shifts may fall on December 24 & 25. For all 3 shifts combined this happens 3 out of every 8 years. Many departments remedy the situation by “flip-flopping” 12/23 & 12/24.

Example:

<u>December</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>
Scheduled	C	C	A	A	B	B
Change to	C	A	C	A	B	B

10.10. What are the positive benefits of the 48/96 schedule for management?

Comments from management were consistent with comments from labor for the following positive benefits:

- • **Higher moral at work**
- • **Increased productivity on duty**
- • **Better project follow through**
- • **More continuity on shift**
- • **Better communication between shifts**
- • **Less duplication of work**

- • **Reduced employee turnover / more available applicants**

Managers generally felt having the 48/96 schedule made for a more attractive benefit package. In tight labor markets, such as for Firefighter Paramedic, departments using the 48/96 schedule draw a much larger pool of applicants. One department adopted 48/96 to curb employee turnover with positive results.

- • **May help city meet air quality / carpool mandates**

Several Southern California cities received incentives for reducing commutes.

- • **No negative effects on sick leave or workers comp.**

A number of departments have tracked these stats very closely over a period of several years. No departments found any increase of sick leave usage or workers comp claims. A few departments have seen a small decrease in sick leave usage.

11.11. What are the negative aspects of the 48/96 schedule for management?

- • **Difficulty meeting with shift personnel when working Sat./Sun rotation.**

Once every six weeks a shift will work both Saturday and Sunday. This means there is a ten day period when shift personnel will not be on duty to meet with those working a typical 40 hour work week (fire administration, vendors, etc.) This has become less of a problem with the advent of E-mail and voice mail.

- • **Difficulty filling short-term callbacks**

As personnel may move / live further away, it is harder to fill short-term vacancies.

- • **Coordination of training**

It is harder to coordinate training with outside agencies that are not on the 48/96 schedule.

12.12. What size department, how many calls per company?

We attempted to contact departments that have similar demographics to our own, some are smaller and some are larger. About half operate paramedic engines, squads or ambulances. Several departments have companies that run 8-12 calls per day.

13.13. Do you have constant staffing? How much overtime?

Two out of three departments surveyed use a constant staffing model. Average overtime for a firefighter ranged from 10–15 shifts per year.

14.14. How many members commute more than 1 hour to work each way?

In most departments, less than half of its members commute more than 1 hour to work each way. Reduction of commute was not the primary motivation for most departments. Note: three of the four work group members who contributed to this report “live in town”.

15.15. If you had to do it all over again what would you do different?

- • Wished we had started sooner!
- • Use a 1-year trial period, 6 months not long enough
- • Allow those opposed equal time to make presentations

16.16. How will the 48/96 schedule affect our current policies and procedures?

It is impossible to predict all of the possible consequences of 48/96 on our existing policies and procedures. Most can be applied without any modifications. Expectations and performance standards will not change.

Example: awake, in uniform and properly groomed by 7:00 am for each shift.

For the purposes of daily work routines, vacation leave, sick leave, scheduled overtime duty (SOD), stand-ins, force hires or any other policies / procedures, *each twenty-four hour shift is considered independently!*

Example: a member takes off two consecutive shifts on vacation, Monday/Tuesday. Overtime for each 24-hour shift is filled separately. (At least one department on 48/96 is successfully using Telestaff.)

Force hires are the necessary tradeoff when working constant staffing on any schedule. Our current force hire policy, based on a calendar rotation, will have the **same** consequences with the 48/96 schedule that we now have with the Kelly schedule. (See sample force hire calendars demonstrating the various scenarios, attached)

Conclusion

As humans we are hesitant to change. But it is only through change that progress occurs. The 48/96 work schedule clearly improves on the traditional 3-platoon method of around the clock coverage. It is a win-win situation for firefighters and the public we serve through more efficient use of time and resources. We believe the known benefits far out weigh any perceived concerns. It is our recommendation, if supported by a majority vote of the membership, to pursue a 1-year trial period.

We would encourage anyone with questions to contact a member of the work group or any of the fire departments listed.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Captain Josh Roten

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Firefighter Paramedic Brian Schwalbe