

Work Hours Policy

Source: Ohio EPA Administration; Department of Administrative Services

Contact: Office of Employee Services

OEPA must observe established core business hours to ensure appropriate levels of customer service and operational needs are met. At a minimum, all divisions, offices and districts must ensure that they are adequately staffed to perform all of their business administrative functions for both internal and external customers during these core business hours. Business administrative functions may include, but are not limited to, responding to inquiries from the public and other state agencies, conducting inspections, and meeting operational objectives.

A. General Information

1. Agency core business hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.
2. "Adequate staff coverage" is defined as maintaining adequate management, administrative and technical staff coverage to efficiently conduct normal business functions. Division, office, and district chiefs shall have the responsibility and discretion to determine how adequate staff coverage is maintained during core business hours. At a minimum, this includes maintaining appropriate staffing levels during core business hours, including managerial, administrative and technical staff, to respond accurately and appropriately to inquiries from the public, press, agencies, internal customers, and other stakeholders.
3. An employee is required to be at their workstation ready to commence work at their approved start time. Unless prior approval has been obtained by their supervisor, employees are not permitted to work and will not be compensated for any time for which they are not scheduled to work. Supervisors shall conduct audits on a regular basis to ensure employees are not working outside their approved set schedule.
4. Notwithstanding adjustments made pursuant to sections C or D below, employees will schedule a standard 8 hour work day in accordance with B below. However, on any given day, with supervisor approval, an employee may adjust the number of hours of their work day by up to 30 minutes to handle work issues or to account for exigent circumstances, balancing that

adjustment on that day or another day that week. As a result an employee might have three 8 hour days, a 7.6 hour day and an 8.4 hour day in a particular week. In no event can any single day vary from 8 hours by more than 30 minutes (i.e., a range of 7.5 to 8.5 hours), and total hours for the week must equal 40. This type of adjustment may also be made to account for a lunch period that extended past scheduled time (e.g. an employee returns from lunch 42 minutes when scheduled for 30 minutes). Except as otherwise provided in B(1), in no event can an adjusted day begin before 7:00 am or end later than 6:00 pm. This practice is not to become routine or permanent.

5. Each employee is to be scheduled for an unpaid lunch period during the scheduled work day when working in excess of 6 hours. Employees must take at least a ½ hour lunch period. Meal periods are not to be omitted or reduced to shorten the workday. Employees must not open or close their day with a meal period. Employees should not be required to work during meal periods unless operationally necessary and directed by the supervisor. When directed to work during meal periods for unusual operational needs, employees must be compensated.
6. Set schedules may be adjusted based on operational needs with fourteen (14) days' notice to the employee.
7. When set schedules are influenced by parties other than OEPA, supervisors have the flexibility to change employee schedules to complete specific tasks/assignments. Supervisors shall notify employees of such changes as soon as is reasonably possible.
8. Due to the nature of the duties performed, certain positions will always have a standard work schedule of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and are not eligible for any other schedule.

B. Establishing Schedules

OEPA employees who are full time permanent are assigned a standard work schedule of an 8 hour day with an uncompensated 1 hour lunch period (8:00 am - 5:00 pm) for a 40 hour work week. Part time permanent employees are assigned a standard work week based on the set number of hours they are scheduled to work each week.

Employees may request modifications to the standard schedule following the process outlined below.

1. On a quarterly basis, (quarters are to begin June 1, September 1, December 1, March 1), employees are to submit to their supervisor their desired set work schedule for the upcoming quarter which, with supervisor approval, may deviate from the agency core hours of 8:00 am-5:00 pm. Employees may request approval to begin their day as early as 7:00¹ am and no later than 9:00 am and end their day no later than 6:00 pm, take lunch in half hour increments from 0.5 to 2.0 hours, and reduce their work hours or extend their day accordingly. A set schedule need not be the same for each day of the quarter. An employee's lunch hour(s) may not be broken up into smaller increments throughout the workday. For example, an employee who request a 1 hour lunch may not take ½ in the morning and ½ hour in the afternoon.
2. Supervisors, in consultation with their manager and chief, may approve the quarterly schedule request as long as there remains adequate coverage and operational needs are met. Within the quarter, an employee may submit to the supervisor a request to revise a set schedule for extenuating circumstances. The supervisor shall consult with their manager and chief prior to approval.
3. Divisions, offices and districts are to provide OES with a spreadsheet of all approved work schedules, including compressed schedules in accordance with C below, for the particular quarter. The spreadsheet shall show how the division is maintaining adequate staff coverage during the agency's core business hours.

C. Compressed Workweek (OES Chief Approval Required)

Based on operational need, an employee or groups of employees may be authorized to work full time hours in less than the traditional 5-day workweek by increasing daily hours worked. An employee authorized for this type of schedule is said to be working a compressed schedule.

¹ Based on a business need, a division, district or office chief may request approval to modify the 7:00 am start time to 6:30 am for an employee or group of employees. The request must be submitted and approved by the OES and include a demonstrated business purpose.

1. A compressed workweek schedule should only be requested when **specific business process, purpose or productivity of the employee** warrants such a schedule. Adequate staffing levels must be maintained for any office, division, and district requesting compressed work schedules. Legitimate business or operational purposes may include, but are not limited to, requirements for additional field related work due to seasonal operational need, payroll processing, and sampling events. The use of a compressed workweek is not to be requested or used for “performance reward or recruitment or retention” purposes and such requests will not be approved by OES.
2. Requests for compressed work schedules must be submitted to OES by the chief prior to implementation and requests should generally be for an individual or a small group of employees.
3. If a compressed workweek schedule is approved, the compressed work schedule is not a guaranteed right and may be withdrawn, revoked or modified if required by core business hour’s coverage, operational needs, or other business needs identified by the agency, including employee abuse.

D. Flexible Hours

1. **Flex hours are temporary deviations from an already established set schedule and are not to become routine or permanent.** The decision to offer flexible hours may not be available to all employees. Service to the public and administrative support services within the agency will be of controlling and paramount importance in any flexible hour request approval. Management may not offer flexible hours or may deny requests for flexible hours for positions that have public interaction responsibilities or other critical time constrained duties (e.g., answering office phones, responding to public inquiries, internal time-sensitive obligations) due to the nature of their work.
2. Once a division, office, and district have developed a quarterly schedule of set work hours, as outlined in B (1) above, that provides for adequate coverage during core business hours, it may offer employees an opportunity to request to work flex hours with regard to the scheduling of hours worked which may deviate from their set schedule
3. Flex work hours are on a **pay period** basis and must be submitted for supervisor’s approval. Prior to approving any request for flex hours, the

supervisor must consult and obtain approval from their manager and chief. Agency management retains the right to determine when flex hours are practical and to adjust the number of employees approved for flex hours as appropriate.

4. An employee may obtain authorization to flex his or her work hours by obtaining permission to do any of the following in a **certain pay period** on a **non-routine, non-permanent basis**:
 - a) Obtain permission to work, **on any given day**, his or her typical numbers of hours at times which differ from the employees set schedule. For example, an employee who has a set schedule established under (B)(1) of 7:00 am to 4:00 pm might be authorized, on a certain day, to work from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, instead.
 - b) Obtain permission to work, **during any given week**, fewer hours on one day that week with the missed hours made up on one or more other days that week. For example, an employee might request and be authorized, for that week, to work 9 hours on one day and a 7 hour day another day that week.
5. Requests for flexible hours are to be provided to the supervisor with a schedule (electronic or paper or by other methods directed by their chief) that includes the set schedule and requested flex work hours for the coming pay period. The request must include the employee's start and end time for each day and the number of hours the employee is scheduled to work each day. After consulting with their manager and chief, supervisors will determine if the requested flex work hours can be approved based on operational need, including but not limited to, maintaining adequate staff coverage to conduct normal business functions, other business needs and employee productivity.

The agency reserves the right to grant or restrict the privileges in this policy in consideration of operational need and/or instances of abuse. The privileges offered herein are not a guaranteed right, even when past practices have permitted periodic flex work hours, and may be denied if required to meet adequate staff coverage needs, operational needs, or other business needs identified by the agency.