

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS NOTICE

04-23

1/27/23

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSPECTION PROGRAM PERSONNEL

I. PURPOSE

This notice provides instructions for implementing flexible work arrangements requested by inspection program personnel (IPP) to allow for a work-life balance. The program will allow IPP to request flexible work arrangements, including work schedules for both regular and overtime hours, contingent on the availability of options to cover required inspection duties. This notice also provides updates to the procedure for billing facilities for reimbursable overtime.

II. BACKGROUND

The Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations Bill, signed March 15, 2022, for the first time allows FSIS to charge regulated establishments the cost of inspection services provided outside of the establishment's approved hours of operations and for inspection services provided on Federal holidays, independent of the pay status of the employee. That change allows FSIS to provide opportunities for flexible work arrangements for inspection personnel to achieve work-life balance.

III. ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS

- A. Any IPP may request flexible work arrangements.
- B. Flexible work arrangements are voluntary and are initiated at the request of the employee and contingent upon the approval by FSIS, Office of Field Operations management.
- C. Flexible work arrangement schedules can be requested by either a single employee or a group of employees occupying in-plant inspection positions.
- D. Flexible work arrangements are considered on a first-come first-served basis, either for a specific short period of time or for the long term on a case-by-case basis.
- E. IPP may request flexible work arrangements to enhance employees' work-life balance.
- F. IPP participating in a flexible work arrangement are to propose how the assignment will be covered over a bi-weekly work schedule.
- G. Management is to consider approving proposed flexible work arrangements that request different total number of hours per week, as-long-as the proposed schedule covers all hours of required inspection. Management may approve proposals from a combination of employees requesting to implement a flexible schedule among themselves that would allow individuals to work a variety of hours while meeting the required facility operating schedule.

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic

NOTICE EXPIRES: 2/1/24

OPI: OPPD

H. Management may terminate a flexible work arrangement if it adversely impacts Agency operations.

I. Proposed changes to an approved flexible work arrangement involving more than one in-plant employee need to be agreed upon by all affected IPP before submitting the request to management for consideration. This includes changes due to employee's promotion, separation, or other actions resulting in change of assignments.

IV. INSTRUCTIONS

A. Field supervisors are to hold a work unit meeting with their IPP to review this notice.

B. Field Supervisors are to review all flexible work arrangement proposals from their direct reports and provide approval or disapproval in a timely manner.

C. Field Supervisors are to retain a copy of all flexible work arrangement proposals from their direct reports and copy of the decision in their email archive for 3 years.

V. PREPARING AND SUBMITTING

A. Interested employees are to submit their request for flexible work arrangements in writing to their immediate supervisor. There is no FSIS official form for this purpose, so submitting the request through the Agency's email system is acceptable.

B. Group flexible work arrangement requests cannot be approved unless all employees agree to the proposed schedule. If multiple employees with different immediate supervisors are involved, the next level supervisor is to approve or disapprove the requests.

C. Employees are to specify the flexibilities requested, the effective date requested and document the voluntary concurrence of each employee if the arrangement involves a group of employees.

D. Flexible work arrangements are not to be implemented until a request is approved in writing by management for each of the employees participating in the agreement and are to be approved prior to the pay period or administrative work week in which the arrangement is to be implemented.

VI. BILLING

If an establishment is working outside of the approved operating schedule (i.e., the establishment is in an overtime status), hours in WebTA are to be recorded using a billable shorthand code ("**REIMB**" in the description for **FMIA**, **PPIA**, or **EPIA**) and an Establishment ID is to be entered for those hours. IPP do not need to be in an overtime status for their hours to be billable; only the establishment needs to be in an overtime status. There is no change to billable time for Voluntary Services. (See [FSIS Directive 12,600.2, Reimbursable Overtime Inspection Services For Meat, Poultry, And Egg Products](#))

VII. APPEALS

If a request for flexible work arrangements is denied, the requesters can submit an appeal in writing to the next level supervisor for adjudication. Bargaining unit employees may also utilize the negotiated grievance procedure in accordance with the Labor Management Agreement.

VII. QUESTIONS

Refer questions through supervisory channels.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rachel A. Edelstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development