



Standard Operating Procedure

SOP ID	OP003
Version	AMENDMENT
Title	Emergency Change to End of Shift Arrangements and Meal Breaks in response to the significant and sustained demand within the South West
Issued by	Operations Senior Management Team
Approved by	Jessica Cunningham, Executive Director of Operations
Date Issued	15 July 2021
Review Date	3 MONTHS FROM DATE OF ISSUE
Directorate	Operations
Publication Category	Mandatory for all operational staff ALL COUNTIES Deviation permissible by Strategic Commander ONLY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At time of writing the Trust is at the highest level of Escalation REAP Black, Surge level 4 and has been since 14 June 2021. This is an unprecedented position. The Trust has not declared REAP Black for eight years as a result of demand pressures.
- 1.2 In recent weeks the Trust has seen a significant deterioration in a number of key patient safety measures including:
 - a significant deterioration in call answering timeliness as a result of extremely high 999 call volumes – the highest in the Trusts history
 - an increasing patient call queue peaking at times above 350 people who have dialed 999 and are awaiting a resource to be allocated
 - incident volumes consistently over 3,000 a day
 - high numbers of Category 2 patients waiting over 2 hours and
 - another significant stepped deterioration in handover delays
- 1.3 A number of Health Systems in the South West are in Escalation and many other providers including NHS 111 and urgent care services are reporting extremely high levels of demand. Other Ambulance Trusts are also experiencing similar pressures across the UK with 7 Trusts at REAP Black at time of writing.



- 1.4 The Trust is expecting a period of sustained pressure looking ahead. Full UK restrictions have not yet been lifted and the school holidays have not yet commenced. This Emergency SOP reflects this fact and is therefore being implemented for 3 months initially.
- 1.5 **This Emergency SOP has been agreed between the Trust and Unison.** It temporarily supersedes all previous SOPs/clarifications and will be the only version published on the intranet. **The objective of this SOP is to balance patient safety and staff welfare at this time.**
- 2. ENHANCED END OF SHIFT ARRANGEMENTS**
- 2.1 The enhanced arrangements apply equally to all crews regardless of shift length.
- 2.2 The change to end of shift protection is significant. The objective is to get crews back into their local areas more often therefore having a much better opportunity to finish on time. The change is set out in the table below:

End of Shift	Last 60 minutes	Last 30 minutes	Last 5 minutes
Current SOP	C1, P1, C2, P2 and C3 normal deployment No C4 calls or P3 backup	C1, P1 backup normal deployment plus a subset of C2 calls (10D and 28C) and P2 backup Any area of Trust	As for Last 30 minutes
Emergency SOP	C1, P1 backup, C2, and P2 'hot' backup (on blue lights)	Just C1, P1 backup in crew dispatch area only	No calls
Change	Removes C3 and P3 backup calls from the last hour of shift	Removes C2, P2 backup Only responds crews to C1, P1 backup in crew dispatch area	This is new – no calls in last 5 minutes unless crews volunteer

- 3. CHANGE TO MEAL BREAKS FOR ALL DAY CREWS PLUS NIGHT CREWS WITH A SHIFT LENGTH OF 6.5 HOURS TO 10.5 HOURS**
- 3.1 The objective is to get crews their break within their break window.
- 3.2 It is vital that dispatchers seek to manage meal breaks in a proactive manner, recognising that delayed meal breaks will have an impact on resource availability and patients waiting as well as an impact on staff welfare. The aim of the Trust therefore is for the majority of breaks to be taken in the window and this requires joint working between the dispatch teams and operational crews.



- 3.3 Dispatchers should take a dynamic approach to managing breaks and are supported to not send on Category 3 and Category 4 if the calls waiting are within (less than) the 90th centile national response time standard.
- 3.4 There is no distinction in this SOP between any County.
- 3.5 For the purposes of this SOP day crews are defined as on shifts commencing between 05:45 to 17:45.
- 3.6 Overall break entitlement for all shifts of 11 hours or more remains unchanged at 60 minutes.
- 3.7 The **first change** is a move to one mid shift break of 60 minutes duration (for all shifts of 11 hours or more) with an associated significant enhancement to end of shift protection as set out in the table above.
- 3.8 The **second change** is that crews will be returned to their base station for their break unless they volunteer to have their break off base station in which circumstances they will receive a payment per individual of £20. This replaces the subsistence claim of £7.50. In return, crews must book on break as soon as possible taking the most direct route. This will be monitored. Appendix B sets out how to claim.
- 3.9 The meal break window will be of 2 hour duration, mid shift, from the 4.5 hour to the 6.5 hour. Partial protection will apply from the 6th hour during which time crews can only be deployed to a single C1 or P1 backup.
- 3.10 Crews will be fully protected from the 6.5th hour which is the end of the meal break window after which crews cannot be allocated to any further incidents, unless they volunteer to respond to a general broadcast. As an example a 07:00 starting shift of 12 hours duration would have a meal break window from 11:30 to 13:30 with partial protection from 13:00 and full protection from 13:30.

4. CHANGE TO MEAL BREAKS FOR NIGHT SHIFTS OF 11 HOURS OR MORE

- 4.1 There is a 'no change' position. It has been agreed with Unison however that if feedback is received from night crews wishing to have the same arrangements as the day crews then this will be actioned subject to there being enough time to effect the change reasonably.
- 4.2 Night crews with a shift length of 11 hours or more retain 2 breaks under this Emergency SOP and there is a 'no change' position on the break windows and protection arrangements. These are set out below for completeness.

First Break (Meal Break)

- 4.3 The first break window is from the 3rd to the 6th hour. Crews enter partial protection at the 4th hour restricted to deployment to a single Category 1 or P1 backup incident only. Full protection commences from the 6th hour, after which crews cannot be allocated to any further incidents, unless they volunteer to respond in response to a general broadcast.
- 4.4 Crews will be returned to their base station for their first break unless they volunteer to have their break off base station in which circumstances they will receive a payment per individual of £20. This replaces the subsistence claim of £7.50. In return, crews must book on break as soon as possible taking the most



direct route. This will be monitored. Appendix B sets out how to claim.

Second Break (Refreshment Break)

- 4.5 The second break window runs from the 7th hour to the 9th hour of shift. Crews enter partial protection at 7 hours restricted to deployment to a single Category 1 or P1 backup incident only. Full protection will commence at 9 hours, after which crews cannot be allocated to any further incidents, unless they volunteer in response to a general broadcast.
- 4.6 As per existing arrangements the Clinical Hub can break crews for the second break at **any** facilitated point within the Trust. This means that crews are not returned automatically to their base station for the second break. The £20 payment for a break taken off base station does not apply for the second break. This is restricted to the first break only. There are no changes however to the £7.50 subsistence claim that crews can make for the second break off station.

Applicable to All Crews

- 4.7 The break will not be interrupted unless (as is now) crews volunteer in response to a general broadcast until such time as they have completed their break.
- 4.8 Crews and the Clinical Hub need to work together to improve the timeliness of when breaks are taken. It is the stated objective of the Trust that all crews take their meal break within the meal break window. A measure of meal break compliance will be monitored for each area.

SUMMARY TABLE OF CHANGES

		End of Shift applies to ALL Shifts	Break Window 1	Break Window 2	Enter Partial Protection	Full Protection Applies
1	All Day Shifts and Night Shifts 6.5 to 10.5 hours	<u>Last 60 Minutes</u> C1, P1 backup, C2, and P2 'hot' backup (on blue lights)	4.5 th to 6.5 th	n/a	From 6 th hour	From 6.5 th hour
2	Night Shifts 11 hours or more	<u>Last 30 Minutes</u> C1, P1 backup in crew dispatch area only <u>Last 5 minutes</u>	3 rd to 6 th	7 th to 9 th	4 th hour first break 7 th hour refreshment break	6 th hour first break 9 th hour refreshment break



		No Calls				
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5. GENERAL BROADCASTS

- 5.1 General Broadcasts will only be used for confirmed Category 1 or Priority 1 back up requests. The Clinical Hub Duty Manager does however retain authority to authorise the issuing of a general broadcast for an incident of significant concern and in line with clinical advice. Crews can, irrespective of where they are in the shift, volunteer for general broadcasts at their own volition. This can only be superseded by the Escalation and Incident Respond Plan.
- 5.2 For a 30 minute break, if a crew volunteers to a confirmed Category 1 or Priority 1 back up request, and are in their first 20 minutes of their break, they will be able to have their full meal break reallocated. If in the last 10 minutes, then 10 minutes overtime can be claimed.
- 5.3 If the crew is in the first 20 minutes of their primary break when they respond to a general broadcast they will be returned to their base station whenever it is safe to do so. This is in recognition of the crew volunteering in order to respond to the General Broadcast.
- 5.4 If a crew decides to forgo the restart or remainder of a break, a £7.50 allowance per staff member can be claimed. Please follow the hyperlink on how to complete the expense claim:
<http://intranet.swast.nhs.uk/Downloads/SWASFT%20downloads/Finance/ExpensesNotesfornewstarters.docx>).

6. HART

- 6.1 Each member of HART staff is entitled to 60 minutes for a meal break per shift. In the event that the meal break cannot be taken within the first 6 hours of the shift then the meal break period will be managed by the Team Leader balancing work commitment and staff welfare. This may include increasing the call activation threshold to allow these rest breaks to take place.
- 6.2 In order to be able to claim subsistence for an interrupted meal break these meal breaks will need to be agreed with the Team Leader and booked with the Clinical Hub prior to commencement of the break.

7. DECLARATION OF A MAJOR INCIDENT

- 7.1 This is distinct from the current REAP Black situation which is a critical incident.
- 7.2 If a Major Incident is declared this SOP will be reviewed and potentially withdrawn.



Appendix A Trust Shift Codes

From	To			Window	From	To	Length (mins)	Window	From	To	Length (mins)
05:45	17:45	12	820	4.5th to 6.5th hour	10:15	12:15	60				No second break
06:00	13:00	7	821	4.5th to 6.5th hour	10:30	12:30	30				No second break
06:00	14:00	8	822	4.5th to 6.5th hour	10:30	12:30	30				No second break
06:00	16:00	10	845	4.5th to 6.5th hour	10:30	12:30	30				No second break
06:00	18:00	12	823	4.5th to 6.5th hour	10:30	12:30	60				No second break
06:15	18:15	12	824	4.5th to 6.5th hour	10:45	12:45	60				No second break
06:30	18:30	12	825	4.5th to 6.5th hour	11:00	13:00	60				No second break
06:45	18:45	12	826	4.5th to 6.5th hour	11:15	13:15	60				No second break
07:00	15:00	8	846	4.5th to 6.5th hour	11:30	13:30	30				No second break
07:00	17:00	10	847	4.5th to 6.5th hour	11:30	13:30	30				No second break
07:00	18:30	11.5	827	4.5th to 6.5th hour	11:30	13:30	60				No second break
07:00	19:00	12	828	4.5th to 6.5th hour	11:30	13:30	60				No second break
07:15	19:15	12	829	4.5th to 6.5th hour	11:45	13:45	60				No second break
07:30	19:30	12	848	4.5th to 6.5th hour	12:00	14:00	60				No second break
08:00	18:00	10	849	4.5th to 6.5th hour	12:30	14:30	30				No second break
08:00	20:00	12	830	4.5th to 6.5th hour	12:30	14:30	60				No second break
08:30	18:30	10	850	4.5th to 6.5th hour	13:00	15:00	30				No second break
08:45	19:45	12	831	4.5th to 6.5th hour	13:15	15:15	60				No second break
09:00	19:00	10	851	4.5th to 6.5th hour	13:30	15:30	30				No second break
09:00	20:00	11	832	4.5th to 6.5th hour	13:30	15:30	60				No second break
09:00	21:00	12	833	4.5th to 6.5th hour	13:30	15:30	60				No second break
09:30	19:30	10	852	4.5th to 6.5th hour	14:00	16:00	30				No second break
09:30	21:30	12	834	4.5th to 6.5th hour	14:00	16:00	60				No second break



10:00	20:00	10	853	4.5th to 6.5th hour	14:30	16:30	30	No second break
10:00	21:00	11	835	4.5th to 6.5th hour	14:30	16:30	60	No second break
10:00	22:00	12	836	4.5th to 6.5th hour	14:30	16:30	60	No second break
10:30	20:30	10	854	4.5th to 6.5th hour	15:00	17:00	30	No second break
10:45	21:45	12	837	4.5th to 6.5th hour	15:15	17:15	60	No second break
11:00	21:00	10	855	4.5th to 6.5th hour	15:30	17:30	30	No second break
11:00	22:00	11	856	4.5th to 6.5th hour	15:30	17:30	60	No second break
11:00	23:00	12	838	4.5th to 6.5th hour	15:30	17:30	60	No second break
11:30	23:00	11.5	839	4.5th to 6.5th hour	16:00	18:00	60	No second break
12:00	22:00	10	857	4.5th to 6.5th hour	16:30	18:30	30	No second break
12:00	23:00	11	840	4.5th to 6.5th hour	16:30	18:30	60	No second break
12:00	00:00	12	841	4.5th to 6.5th hour	16:30	18:30	60	No second break
12:30	00:00	11.5	842	4.5th to 6.5th hour	17:00	19:00	60	No second break
13:00	23:00	10	858	4.5th to 6.5th hour	17:30	19:30	30	No second break
13:00	01:00	12	843	4.5th to 6.5th hour	17:30	19:30	60	No second break
14:00	00:00	10	859	4.5th to 6.5th hour	18:30	20:30	30	No second break
14:00	02:00	12	844	4.5th to 6.5th hour	18:30	20:30	60	No second break
14:30	02:30	12	860	4.5th to 6.5th hour	19:00	21:00	60	No second break
15:00	01:00	10	861	4.5th to 6.5th hour	19:30	21:30	30	No second break
15:00	02:00	11	862	4.5th to 6.5th hour	19:30	21:30	60	No second break
15:00	03:00	12	863	4.5th to 6.5th hour	19:30	21:30	60	No second break
16:00	02:00	10	864	4.5th to 6.5th hour	20:30	22:30	30	No second break



17:45	05:45	12	289	3rd & 6th hour	20:45	23:45	30	7th to 9th hour	00:45	02:45	30
18:00	02:00	8	266	4.5th to 6.5th hour	22:30	00:30	30	No second break			
18:00	06:00	12	209	3rd & 6th hour	21:00	00:00	30	7th to 9th hour	01:00	03:00	30
18:15	06:15	12	210	3rd & 6th hour	21:15	00:15	30	7th to 9th hour	01:15	03:15	30
18:30	06:30	12	211	3rd & 6th hour	21:30	00:30	30	7th to 9th hour	01:30	03:30	30
18:45	06:45	12	212	3rd & 6th hour	21:45	00:45	30	7th to 9th hour	01:45	03:45	30
19:00	07:00	12	213	3rd & 6th hour	22:00	01:00	30	7th to 9th hour	02:00	04:00	30
19:15	07:15	12	214	3rd & 6th hour	22:15	01:15	30	7th to 9th hour	02:15	04:15	30
19:30	07:30	12	291	3rd & 6th hour	22:30	01:30	30	7th to 9th hour	02:30	04:30	30
20:00	06:00	10	248	4.5th to 6.5th hour	00:30	02:30	30	No second break			
20:00	08:00	12	304	3rd & 6th hour	23:00	02:00	30	7th to 9th hour	03:00	05:00	30
20:30	06:30	10	319	4.5th to 6.5th hour	01:00	03:00	30	No second break			
21:00	06:00	9	577	4.5th to 6.5th hour	01:30	03:30	30	No second break			
21:00	07:00	10	249	4.5th to 6.5th hour	01:30	03:30	30	No second break			
21:30	07:30	10	578	4.5th to 6.5th hour	02:00	04:00	30	No second break			
22:00	06:00	8	579	4.5th to 6.5th hour	02:30	04:30	30	No second break			
22:00	07:00	9	581	4.5th to 6.5th hour	02:30	04:30	30	No second break			
22:00	08:00	10	323	4.5th to 6.5th hour	02:30	04:30	30	No second break			
22:30	06:30	8	582	4.5th to 6.5th hour	03:00	05:00	30	No second break			
23:00	07:00	8	583	4.5th to 6.5th hour	03:30	05:30	30	No second break			



Gloucester and Wiltshire 12 Hour Night Shifts Only

17:45	05:45	12	270	3rd & 6th hour	17:45	20:45	40	7th to 9th hour	21:45	23:45	20
18:00	06:00	12	239	3rd & 6th hour	21:00	00:00	40	7th to 9th hour	01:00	03:00	20
18:15	06:15	12	240	3rd & 6th hour	21:15	00:15	40	7th to 9th hour	01:15	03:15	20
18:30	06:30	12	241	3rd & 6th hour	21:30	00:30	40	7th to 9th hour	01:30	03:30	20
18:45	06:45	12	242	3rd & 6th hour	21:45	00:45	40	7th to 9th hour	01:45	03:45	20
19:00	07:00	12	243	3rd & 6th hour	22:00	01:00	40	7th to 9th hour	02:00	04:00	20
19:15	07:15	12	290	3rd & 6th hour	22:15	01:15	40	7th to 9th hour	02:15	04:15	20
19:30	07:30	12	261	3rd & 6th hour	22:30	01:30	40	7th to 9th hour	02:30	04:30	20
20:00	08:00	12	562	3rd & 6th hour	23:00	02:00	40	7th to 9th hour	03:00	05:00	20



Appendix B - Claiming £20 Payment for Break taken off Base Station

A new field has been added to GRS Web in order for the £20 payment to be claimed.

It appears as a tick box below the existing 'Short Notice Shift Change' box, and is claimed in exactly the same way.

The new field can be seen below:

To claim the £20 payment:-

- Open GRS Web and load your Timesheet Record
- Select the date on which you wish to claim the £20
- Tick the 'Meal Break Off Base Station' box as shown above
- Save the changes
- At the end of the month, ensure all the changes you need to make are done before checking and submitting your Timesheet.



Version Control Sheet

Version Control was started with the introduction of version 2.0 of this SOP.

Version	Date	Author	Summary of changes
Amendment For go live Thursday, 10 December 2020	8/12/2020	Jessica Cunningham and Dave Philips	Following bulletin article section on second break expanded and break window clarified from 7 th to 9 th hours with full protection at the 9 th Minor changes to wording following review by Dave Philips
Amendment	11/12/2020	Jessica Cunningham	Minor changes to the wording in sections 3.5, 4.4 and 8.2 In section 5.3 the addition of the end of shift arrangements
Amendment	01/02/2021	Jessica Cunningham	Changes from the 3 rd – 6 th hours to the 4 th and 6 th hour for all 10 hours and below. SOP updated to clarify arrangements as per these changes in 2.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 2.6 newly added and appendix A and B updated to reflect new windows.
Emergency SOP Amendment	13/07/2021	Operations SMT and Unison	Emergency SOP agreed with changes to end of shift and meal breaks. All sections amended as appropriate.