

Standard Timesheet Elements Implementation Frequently Asked Questions

Effective March 31, 2005, all agencies within the executive branch of state service will be required to begin using timesheets that are in compliance with new standards developed by the Department of Administration. These timesheets will begin capturing information for the April 1 – 15th payroll period.

For some Departments, the new standard timesheet elements are a significant change in their timesheet formats. For other Departments, changes were minor or non-existent as the timesheets in use were already close to or in compliance. As a result, Departments are meeting the mandatory standards in different ways; starting from scratch and creating brand new timesheets, using the example provided by the Department of Administration or adding information to current timesheets to bring them into compliance.

Through this process, many questions have arisen regarding the policy and its implementation. The Division of Personnel has provided answers to some of the most frequently asked questions. If you have additional questions, please contact your Division of Personnel Technical Services contact.

What are the standard timesheet elements? The standard timesheet elements are the mandatory and recommended standards necessary to pay people correctly and in compliance with the Alaska Statutes, bargaining unit contracts, the Personnel Rules, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), federal regulations, and other rule related to pay and leave. The mandatory elements include employee and departmental information, hours of work and pay status including start and stop times, funding sources and the appropriate approvals. The list of specific requirements is included in the Alaska Administrative Manual (AAM) and in the Division of Personnel's Statewide Policy and Procedure. Both the Admin Manual and DOP's policies and procedures can be found on line.

Admin Manual: http://fin.admin.state.ak.us/dof/ak_admin_manual/aam_toc.jsp

DOP Policy & Procedure: <http://dop.state.ak.us/ppdb/index.cfm>

Who is required to complete a timesheet? All overtime eligible employees are required to complete a timesheet for each pay period they are employed with the State of Alaska.

As a general rule, overtime-exempt employees are not required to complete a timesheet unless the employing agency requires one for business reasons. Employees who are not required to complete a timesheet must still report leave usage, or lack thereof, to a designated timekeeper/contact. Most departments have leave reporting tools and a policy in place for overtime-exempt employees to ensure timely reporting and proper leave accounting.

When would an overtime-exempt employee be required to complete a timesheet? This is determined at the departmental level and would be in accordance with the department's internal policy. For example, a department may require accurate time reporting as documentation for funding allocation being charged to federal grants.

Who signs the timesheet? The timesheet is signed by both the employee and the employee's supervisor to serve as verification that the time and hours of work and leave recorded are true and correct.

What if an employee is gone/absent and unable to sign their own timesheet? The supervisor should write "employee unavailable for signature" on the employee's signature line; the supervisor should then sign the timesheet as usual and submit it for processing.

Upon the employee's return, the supervisor and the employee should review timesheets submitted in their absence and ensure the time reported is correct. If any changes are needed, a corrected timesheet should be submitted as soon as possible, with appropriate signatures and clearly marked "amended timesheet". Technical Services will then process any adjustments needed.

What happens if leave slips are submitted late which weren't previously reported? When Technical Services receives late leave slips, adjustments are processed to correct the employee's leave accounts. Adjustments are time consuming and it is preferred that leave be reported timely.

In addition, late leave reporting can result in an overpayment when an employee didn't have the leave available at the time it was actually taken. When leave is submitted timely, leave can be charged appropriately and it greatly reduces the chance of improper reporting to an employee's leave balance.

Why do start and stop times have to be included? Start and stop times are required to accurately pay employees for regular time worked and any premium pays which may be due for those hours. How an individual is compensated for the hours worked is determined by a combination of collective bargaining provisions, personnel rules and state and federal statutes such as the FLSA. Without accurate reporting of time, it is difficult to tell if an employee has been paid appropriately. Accurate reporting of time protects the employer from false pay claims and assures that the employee receives all compensation due.

How do I accurately report start and stop times? The start and stop times are used for reporting the beginning of a shift, the mandatory lunch break, and the ending of a shift. Additional non-paid shift breaks would be reported using the stop and start times to document when an employee leaves work and then returns to work in the same day. For instance, an employee normally starting at 8:00, left at 9:30 for an appointment, returned to work at 11:00, observed their normal lunch break and then returned and completed their normal schedule. The start and stop times would be noted as such: start 08:00, stop 09:30, start 11:00, stop 12:00, start 13:00, stop 16:30. Total hours worked would be calculated as 6 hours and the employee would submit a leave slip (if leave eligible) for the 1.5 hours needed to complete the employee's shift for that day.

Are the daily 10:00 and 3:00 breaks reported using the start and stop times? No.

When an employee with an assigned start time comes in early, for example, to get a cup of coffee or chat with coworkers prior to beginning their shift, what do they record as their start time for that day? The employee would record their start time when they started working. If an employee's assigned shift begins at 8:00 and they arrive at 7:45, they would record 8:00 if they started working at 8:00.

What if I come in early and my supervisor asks me to start working on a project? An employee should record the time they started working; the supervisor should ensure and maintain the operating hours for their employees, whether it is starting early or arriving late.

What if I come in late and, with my supervisor's approval, work late to complete my workday? An employee should record the start and stop times they worked that day.

Why do we have to use military time format? Military time is used for reporting start and stop times to avoid confusion between AM and PM. This helps payroll and timekeeping staff ensure any premium pays due are paid appropriately.

Why are the fields for collocation codes on the timesheet a required element? Multiple lines are provided on the timesheet if it is necessary to allocate time reported between multiple funding sources or if time reported needs to be charged to an alternate source rather than an employee's code of record in the Alaska State Payroll System (AKPAY). Although it is a required element on the timesheet, departmental business needs dictate whether or not the field needs to be completed. Some departments do not require the field to be used because the funding/coding information is maintained in AKPAY and is correctly charged from that system to the department's budget.

When will the new timesheets go into effect? The implementation date is March 31, 2005. The new timesheets should be used for reporting the pay period beginning April 1st.

Why was this policy implemented? The Division of Personnel, the Division of Finance and the Division of Labor Relations has formed a task group called the Administrative Payroll Team (APT). The APT reviewed past issues where the state was determined to have liability due to improper, inconsistent, or incomplete payroll reporting. The APT then reviewed all timesheets currently in use throughout the executive branch to determine how best to limit those types of liabilities in the future. Rather than have one timesheet for everyone to use, the APT determined it would be more appropriate to identify mandatory and recommended elements to be included in all timesheets. This approach allows departments the ability to tailor timesheets while still assuring consistency in pay practices. The standard timesheet elements have been approved by the Commissioner of Administration and will be incorporated into the Alaska Administrative Manual (AAM) effective 3/31/05.