



Monitoring Staff Attendance And Overtime Work

Corruption Prevention Department

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MONITORING STAFF ATTENDANCE AND OVERTIME WORK

Introduction

In all organizations, supervision of attendance and overtime work is a common area of concern in staff management, especially when staff are required to work outdoor or outside normal office hours. Common malpractice includes fabricating attendance records and claiming undue overtime allowance, very often involving compromised supervisors. Such malpractice not only affects operating efficiency and increases staff cost of an organization but, more importantly, undermines management control and hurts the reputation of an organization.

This Best Practice Module aims to provide companies with a checklist of good practices in monitoring staff attendance and overtime work, and recommend measures that could help prevent corruption and impropriety.

Supervision of Attendance

Attendance records provide an effective means to monitor the working hours and output of individual staff, the former of which may have implications on pay and related allowance. Staff attendance records are often maintained by a register for staff to sign on/off duty or a time clock using punch cards. Electronic devices such as 'smart cards' or 'global positioning systems' are also used. For example, to monitor staff performing patrol duties in premises like car parks, supervisor could employ devices like touch probe and electronic plates to record the patrolling routes and timings.

Attendance Records

Staff attendance records should be maintained properly for a reasonable period of time and should be subject to regular supervisory checks.

To prevent falsification of records, front line supervisors should:

- check the daily staff attendance register or the clocking machine; and
- keep the attendance register at a secured location.

Supervisors at different levels should conduct surprise site checks on staff attendance against the attendance register. In the case of electronic attendance records, exceptional reports on irregularities, such as officers late for duty, should be generated for checking.

All supervisory checks should be documented properly and any irregularities observed should be followed-up duly and reported to management.

Monitoring of Outdoor Staff

It is more difficult to monitor staff performing outdoor duties, such as delivery or field patrol, particularly those who are required to work at more than one location. Apart from electronic devices using Global Positioning System, the following measures are recommended:

- daily work schedules should be drawn up for such staff taking into account the workload and travelling time as a basis of monitoring their attendance to work at different locations; and
- supervisors should conduct surprise site checks at selected work locations based on these schedules.

Policy on Overtime Work

Overtime work may involve the payment of special allowance to staff and/or time-off in lieu which may carry substantial financial implications. All organizations should formulate and make public a policy on ways to prevent abuse of overtime work and how staff should be compensated for overtime work.

Setting of Benchmarks

To reduce the discretion of supervisors in allocating overtime work and hence tampering with overtime allowance payments, organizations should establish benchmark output of different jobs to monitor the workload and to assess the need for overtime work.

Control of Overtime Work

To ensure effective control of overtime work, the following measures are recommended:

- supervisors should give detailed requirements and justifications for overtime work e.g. the number of man hours required;
 - prior approval for overtime work should be obtained from the designated managerial staff; and
 - the operational requirements of overtime work should be monitored and reviewed regularly.
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Allocation of Overtime Work

Favouritism in the allocation of overtime work to individual staff, or the perception of such favouritism, is a common cause of complaints. Excessive discretion enjoyed by a single officer in allocating such overtime work is prone to corruption or malpractice. There should be a fair, objective mechanism for allocation of the overtime work to all eligible staff.

The following preventive measures and safeguard are recommended:

- the selection criteria for staff to perform overtime duties and the method of allocating such duties should be defined and made known to the staff concerned;
- if practicable, overtime work should be allocated to interested staff on a fair share basis (e.g. by rotation); and
- supervisor should maintain proper records of the overtime work carried out by individual staff, including hours of work and the total overtime allowance paid, and compile summary reports to the management.

Supervision of Overtime Work

Overtime work duties are mostly performed outside the normal office hours. There should be adequate supervision to prevent malpractice through, for example, the following measures:

- supervisors should check the output from overtime duties against benchmarks on a daily basis or at frequent intervals;
- a team leader should be appointed to supervise the overtime work carried out; and
- surprise checks should be conducted by supervisors.

Certifying Overtime Records

Records of the overtime duties performed by individual staff, including the number of hours and the tasks completed, should be certified by authorized supervisors.

Time-off

Time-off granted in lieu of overtime pay should be approved by designated supervisors, properly recorded, and counter-checked by managerial staff.

Advisory Services Group

In addition to the series of Best Practice Modules, the ICAC maintains an **Advisory Services Group** to provide free and confidential corruption prevention advice to private organizations covering various aspects of their activities such as staff administration, stores management and administration of contracts. For further information, please contact the Advisory Services Group at telephone no. 2526 6363 or fax no. 2522 0505 or email address asg@cpd.icac.org.hk.



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