

# FEDERAL FIRE FIGHTER TRADE TIME

*The IAFF supports H.R. 3243 and urges Members of Congress to cosponsor the bill.*

## **BACKGROUND**

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), municipal fire fighters across the country are allowed to swap shifts or “trade time” and still be paid according to their regular work schedules. Municipal fire fighters who trade time are paid as if they had worked their scheduled shifts.

This workplace flexibility gives fire fighters at the state and local level the ability to take time off for family obligations by trading shifts with fellow fire fighters without drawing down their leave or costing them expected overtime pay.

Unlike their municipal counterparts, federal fire fighters can only trade time within a two-week pay period. Any shift swaps outside a pay period affects calculation of hours worked and overtime pay. The inclusion of trade time in overtime calculations at the federal level limits a rank-and-file fire fighter’s ability to attend to unexpected personal obligations without taking leave and potentially sacrificing overtime pay.

Excluding trade time from the calculation of overtime pay in the federal sector would serve as a cost-effective tool to give more leave flexibility to federal fire fighters while maintaining minimum staffing requirements during potential federal fire fighter manpower shortages.

Trade time may also aid in the ability of federal agencies to recruit and retain trained fire fighters and boost fire fighter morale. Federal fire fighters deserve the same flexibilities in the workplace as their fellow state and local fire fighters.

## **CURRENT LEGISLATION**

*U.S. House:* H.R. 3243, to exclude trade time from federal fire fighter overtime pay  
Sponsor: John P. Sarbanes (D-MD)

*Summary:* H.R. 3243 would exclude trade time from the calculation of overtime pay for federal fire fighters.

## **CONGRESSIONAL ACTION**

On July 16, 2009, H.R. 3243 was introduced in the House of Representatives and referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.