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United States Department of Agriculture  
Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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**Administrative  
Notice**

MRP/APHIS 23-03

04/19/2023

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**Maxiflex 24/7 Policy**

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) mission and focus vary among programs; however, the importance of protecting agriculture for the American people and having the necessary tools in place to ensure mission success does not waiver. To guarantee that Agency programs have scheduling flexibility when needed, and consistency of practice where appropriate, APHIS is revising its maxiflex policy as described below.

1. [APHIS Administrative Notice 23-01, Length of Workday Policy](#), dated 05/01/2023, applies to this policy. Refer to the notice for the permitted workday lengths for employees.
2. APHIS will follow consistent Agency-wide practices in establishing formal tours of duty, scheduling both work time and lunch periods, and earning/using credit hours. These practices may not be modified by individual Programs including that:
  - a. All employees under maxiflex must complete the [MRP-346, Designation of Flexible Work Schedule and Employee Tour of Duty](#) form and obtain supervisory approval for their requested tour. Timekeepers must securely store the completed document in the employee's Time and Attendance file.
  - b. All employees working five or more hours must take an unpaid lunch period of 30-45-60 minutes in length. Exceptions are outlined in [Human Resources Desk Guide Subchapter 4610, Tours of Duty, Section C](#). Scheduling a lunch break at the end of the workday to end the workday earlier is prohibited.
  - c. Credit hours may not be earned until 80 hours of paid time is reached in a pay period.
  - d. The "stacking" of work hours at the beginning of the pay period to shorten the work week at the end of the pay period is prohibited. If, due to mission demands, an employee is required to work longer hours, then the employee is responsible, as soon as possible, for notifying the supervisor. The supervisor will determine how to process, subject to workday approvals identified in APHIS Administrative Notice 23-01, Length of Workday Policy.
3. In addition to establishing specific, Agency-wide practices, the new APHIS maxiflex policy identifies several areas where Deputy Administrators may establish Program

Parameters to optimize mission delivery. These Deputy Administrator defined Program Parameters must be reflected in Program employees' regular and recurring work schedules and documented on the MRP-346. Deputy Administrators may delegate the authority to establish Scheduling Norms to Program units. (Scheduling Norms are within a Program's Parameters and describe the standards with which regular and recurring employees' tours of duty will usually conform facilitating mission accomplishment. These may be established on a unit-by-unit basis due to the variety of work within each Program.) Areas of the APHIS-wide maxiflex policy where Deputy Administrators may make modifications include the following:

- a. **The APHIS-wide work time band of seven days per week, 24 hours per day.** Deputy Administrators may constrict this time band to suit organizational needs.
- b. **Minimum core times on Wednesdays from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, local time zone.** Deputy Administrators may expand this timeframe based on mission requirements. This does not preclude nor restrict the use of core time deviations. The minimum core times may not be further constricted.

Wildlife Services (WS) is granted an exception to change the minimum core times noted above for frontline employees only. The WS Program parameters for core times must include the minimum of two hours on each of two days in the pay period for these frontline employees. This exception excludes WS administrative staff.

- c. **Allowing employees to flex up to two hours each day without supervisory approval.** Deputy Administrators may adjust this timeframe as appropriate however, some level of flexing must be permitted as it is inherent to the Maxiflex work schedule.
  - d. **Earning of base and credit hours on Saturdays and/or Sundays.** This practice may be limited by Deputy Administrators consistent with organizational needs.
4. Once Program Specific parameters are established, all employees under maxiflex must operate under their respective Program's parameters and scheduling norms.
  5. Programs must educate employees on their respective parameters and scheduling norms and the APHIS maxiflex policy. This includes training new APHIS employees and those who transfer between APHIS staffs.
  6. The policies outlined in this Administrative Notice will not apply to APHIS bargaining unit employees until bargaining obligations are met.

All policy changes described in this Administrative Notice remain in effect for one year from the date of its issuance, or until superseded by an APHIS or MRP directive, whichever occurs first.

Please refer operational questions to your program's servicing [Leave and Compensation Specialist](#), Human Resources Operations. Refer policy questions to the Human Resources Division Policy Branch's [Pay, Leave and Tours of Duty Specialist](#).

/s/

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