



COMMUNICATION

02/24

OVERTIME COMPENSATION AND DUTY TRAVEL'S DSA

Geneva
18 January 2024

To: All Members
From: Cosimo Melpignano, FICSA General Secretary

Dear FICSA Members,

Recalling the discussions on Overtime during the 76th Council's Joint Session between HRM, PSA, and SMR, and the decisions D7¹ and D23² of Council stating that FICSA should ensure staff representatives are familiar with ICSC guidelines on overtime, and that the purpose of Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) is to cover the travel-related costs and not excess hours worked, FICSA Secretariat would like to share the following information:

1. The daily subsistence allowance (DSA) shall comprise the total contribution of the United Nations towards such charges as meals, lodging, gratuities, and other such payments made for services rendered during official travel.³
2. The DSA definition in 1967 agreed that the DSA covers the cost of a single room with a bath, and the cost of breakfast, in good, but not luxury, hotels suitable for international officials, including any compulsory service charges or taxes, as the basis of calculation of the rate. To this should be added: the cost of lunch and dinner (i.e. one "full meal" and one smaller meal), including any compulsory service charges or taxes; and a percentage for incidentals, fixed at 15 percent of (i) plus (ii) where compulsory service charges or taxes were included, and 25 percent where no such charges or taxes were included in the cost of room and meals.
3. Overtime, according to the ICSC booklet on the United Nations Common System of salaries, allowances and benefits⁴:

¹ D7: FICSA ExCom should communicate and inform to all staff representative bodies regarding guidance on overtime for locally recruited staff contained in the ICSC review of categories of staff, and the terms of the Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA), which is not designed to cover overtime for staff on missions or official travel.

² D23: The Joint Committee recommended that FICSA Secretariat should recall Staff Association Representatives that they should familiarize themselves with the ICSC guidelines on overtime for General Service Staff* and the terms of the Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) which is not designed to cover overtime for staff on missions or official travel.

³ <https://icsc.un.org/Home/DailySubsistence#>

⁴ <https://icsc.un.org/Resources/SAD/Booklets/sabeng.pdf?r=08866001>

- Overtime: Professional staff are not eligible to receive overtime payments. In some organizations, occasional time off may be granted to staff who have been required to work substantial or recurrent periods above the normal working hours.
 - Overtime compensation: General Service staff required to work overtime may receive compensatory time off or additional non-pensionable payments according to conditions established by the organizations. The amount of overtime compensation is based largely on prevailing local practice. NPOs are entitled to the same allowances and benefits as General Service staff, except for the language allowance and overtime compensation.
4. Hours worked in excess of working hours during duty travel if requested and approved by the supervisor, is compensated with special compensatory time off, and not by overtime⁵. Staff Representatives can advocate meeting organizers to be mindful of the working hours in arranging/organizing meetings and remain respectful to the normal working hours of staff who are on duty travel in attendance. Any expected work to be done beyond the working hours should be pre-requested and pre-approved based on compensatory time off practices of the organization and not taken for granted that staff on duty travel are also expected to adhere to their usual working hours when possible.
 5. Some organizations are starting to recognize that duty travel on weekends should be compensated with time off when it is obliged because of the mission and not personal reasons. A recent example is Information Note 24/2023 implemented in WHO, which illustrates that the overtime and compensatory time off provisions have been expanded to allow both Professional and General Service staff members to claim compensatory leave while on duty travel on weekend days, within prescribed limits. The amended provisions apply to staff members who are obliged to undertake travel on a weekend day of their duty station to be present at the mission duty station on the first or last working day of the week. Compensatory leave claimed for duty travel on weekends should be taken within one month of returning from the duty travel to provide adequate rest for which the compensatory leave is intended. These amendments aim to confirm the Organization's commitment to the wellbeing of staff and ensure that compensatory leave is taken within one month of return from the travel for the purpose that it was intended. These provisions do not apply where staff members have chosen to travel on weekends for personal reasons.

If any staff representative bodies think the above existing arrangements should be reviewed and/or improved, please write to FICSA with clear arguments, rationale, proposals and justification so that we can discuss them at the UN Common System level.

Please share this communication with all your affiliated staff representatives

⁵ <https://undocs.org/en/ST/AI/2013/3> at the UN Secretariat, and similarly in other UN Common System organization's practices.