

MAY 21, 2025

REPORT: #24-01

Frederick County Government Division of Fire and Rescue Services Overtime and Staffing

Performance Audit

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I. Executive Summary

SC&H Attest Services, P.C., a wholly owned affiliate of SC&H Group, Inc. (SC&H) was engaged by Frederick County Government (FCG, the County) Interagency Internal Audit Authority (IAAA) to conduct a performance audit of the County's Division of Fire & Rescue Services' (DFRS) overtime and staffing processes (collectively, audit). The audit was performed in two phases: a planning and risk assessment phase and a testing phase.

DFRS provides a range of both emergency and non-emergency response services to the County. DFRS responded to approximately 38,000 calls in calendar year (CY) 2023 (CY23), providing emergency services, including medical, fire, rescue, and hazardous materials response. DFRS's non-emergency services include the Fire Marshall's Office life-safety inspections, mobile community health program preventative efforts, and community outreach and education events.¹

The following provides a summary of the audit objectives, procedures, and results. Additional details surrounding the audit can be found in the report's body and appendices.

SC&H thanks DFRS for their service to the community, and whose assistance and availability were vital during the audit process.

Audit Objectives

1. Evaluate County policies and procedures over staffing and overtime within DFRS.
2. Review the 2023 Fire-Rescue Service Plan and 2023 Advanced Life Support Deployment Plan.
3. Review the After Action Report for Battalion Chief Laird.
4. Review industry standards with regards to staffing and overtime staffing.
5. Review the memorandum of understanding between the County and the Career Firefighters Association of Frederick County Maryland (IAFF Local 3666).
6. Review and test data driving factors to staffing and overtime such as: number of stations, station location, apparatus location, apparatus type per location, call volume, call response times, volunteerism and any other factors which the auditor deems necessary.
7. Evaluate overtime data and factors across DFRS including staff overtime figures.
8. Evaluate the format of overtime staffing and assignment of overtime, whether performed through software or manually.
9. Through data and fact finding, provide recommendations to strengthen efficient staffing mechanisms.

Performance Audit Summary

SC&H conducted the audit with the following two-phased approach.

1. Phase 1, Planning Survey and Risk Assessment: Understand processes, evaluate risks/controls, and develop audit program.
2. Phase 2, Testing: Conduct evaluation procedures to achieve internal audit objectives, conclude internal audit and report results.

Summary Results

DFRS monitors and performs scheduling activities 24 hours a day in order to facilitate proper staffing to stations and apparatus to ensure service and response to citizens of the County. While the Division

¹ Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services Annual Report 2023

continues to effectively manage and deploy their personnel, apparatus, and equipment resources, areas for improvement exist. Five reportable improvement opportunities are included as a result of this audit.

Recommendations presented for DFRS's review are related to:

1. Review of trainings, minimum staffing levels, and staffing of specialized and supervisory personnel within DFRS to assist in mitigating the need for overtime and potential for determining minimum staffing levels.
2. Enhanced policies and procedural documentation reflective of the current procedures performed within DFRS related to staffing and overtime processes.
3. Enhanced scheduling processes to ensure compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and compatible responsibilities.
4. Enhanced monitoring and enforcement of sick leave.
5. Enhanced functionality between the Infor WFM and Telestaff systems in order to eliminate redundant and manual tasks.

II. Performance Audit Summary

Background

SC&H Attest Services, P.C., a wholly owned affiliate of SC&H Group, Inc. (SC&H) was engaged by Frederick County Government (FCG, the County) Interagency Internal Audit Authority (IIAA) to conduct a performance audit of the County's Division of Fire & Rescue Services' (DFRS) overtime and staffing processes (collectively, audit). The audit was performed in two phases: a planning and risk assessment phase and a testing phase.

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Per the DFRS 2023 Annual Report, DFRS is organized into three sections:

1. *Emergency Services*: includes field operations, the Emergency Medical Services Office, the Training Office, the Health and Safety Office, and special operations programs.
2. *Administrative Services*: includes the Logistics Office, the Fire Marshall's Office, the Finance Office, the EMS Billing Office, and fleet and facility functions.
3. *Volunteer Services*: coordinates with the 25 independent volunteer fire, rescue, and EMA corporations in addition to establishing and overseeing county-wide volunteer recruitment and retention programs.

For fiscal year (FY) 2024, DFRS is comprised of 581 uniformed and 20 civilian personnel and deploys career staff to 26 fire rescue stations across the County. According to the DFRS 2023 Annual Report, these stations fall under three separate Battalions, overseen by a Battalion Chief, and serve approximately 284,000 citizens across 664 square miles, with possibilities of a larger area through mutual aid agreements. These mutual aid agreements with neighboring public safety agencies allow DFRS to receive or provide support outside of the County when requested.

The following sections describe DFRS processes regarding budgeting, staffing, scheduling, overtime and its contributors, and timekeeping for career employees within the scope of the audit. Information was obtained through interviews with DFRS management and employees at stations, or from documented policies, procedures, or memorandums.

Planning for Promotions, Transfers, and Budgets

DFRS operates on two unique 52-week periods for the purposes of budgeting and staffing:

1. DFRS Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30)
2. Calendar Year (January 1 – December 31)

Additionally, DFRS operates a Kelly Year (approximately February – January, based on the FLSA cycle) for the purposes of assigning Kelly Days (refer to "*Kelly Day Planning*"). However, this period is not utilized for tracking purposes.

² Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services Annual Report 2023

Scheduling & Staffing

DFRS staffs based on apparatus at stations in order to achieve recommendations present within National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) Standard 1710, with the goal of additional leave impact staff of 50%. NFPA Standard 1710 recommends that a fire engine, ladder truck, and rescue squad have a minimum of four personnel and shall increase in high hazard areas³. Station leave impact is defined as additional personnel over the minimum staffing to cover potential leave and minimize impact. Currently, DFRS has achieved leave impact personnel of approximately 29% through 152 detail positions and a minimum of three personnel to an apparatus. Due to certain personnel qualifications (e.g., hazmat, swift water rescue, truck drivers, tiller drivers, ladder operators, etc.) some employees are specifically assigned to a station or apparatus in order to achieve minimum staffing requirements.

DFRS transfers employees across stations or roles to achieve staffing requirements. These transfers can be either voluntary or involuntary.

1. Voluntary transfers are initiated by individual employees. To request a transfer an employee submits a Transfer Request form, which is accumulated within a Transfer List, held by the Deputy Chief of the Emergency Services Section. The requestor's supervisor reviews and approves or denies the request based on the needs of the station and division.
2. Involuntary transfers occur when DFRS notifies an employee of a transfer, through the use of a General Order, which assigns them to a new station or role. Transfers detailed in General Orders are mandatory and cannot be contested by individuals who have been transferred.

All emergency services employees operate on a Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) period of 144 hours, excluding Kelly Days (*refer to "Kelly Day Planning"*), over a three-week cycle. Any time scheduled or worked in excess of the 144 hours is overtime. All leave taken by non-exempt uniformed employees counts as hours worked for the overtime calculation. Employees are not paid for Kelly Days unless they work on those days. Partial hours worked due to training or other details count towards the 144-hour threshold. Kelly Day hours cannot be rescheduled, and no additional time off is granted for working on a Kelly Day. Employees are not compensated for travel time to scheduled overtime assignments. For those on an 80-hour pay period, hours worked above 40 in a week are compensated with overtime over the base salary.⁴

Employees assigned to the 26 DFRS fire and rescue stations are assigned with one of the following shifts:⁵

- 24 hours on duty, 48 hours off-duty rotating schedule; A, B, and C shift assignments (Including 1 Kelly Day on a 3-week cycle).
- Monday through Friday, four days a week from 06:00 to 18:00 (6am- 6pm) hours (48 hours/week, 12-hour shifts, including 1 Kelly Day per week).

Once staffing assignments are determined, the Scheduling Office Captain uploads employee assignments and schedules in Telestaff, DFRS's scheduling software. The Telestaff system creates schedules in perpetuity based on station/office assignment⁶, position/rank, Kelly Day, planned leave days, etc. Due to the nature of emergency services staffing and workforce availability, the Scheduling Office Captain reviews, revises, and updates scheduling daily. When the Scheduling Office Captain is off duty, on leave, or otherwise unavailable, Battalion Chiefs are responsible for updating the staffing schedule, as appropriate and as needed.

³ NFPA 1710: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments

⁴ DFRS SOP 2.01.11 Extra Hours and Overtime

⁵ DFRS SOP 2.01.01 Work Schedules

⁶ DFRS SOP 2.01.13 Telestaff Scheduling System

Employees within the Administrative Services Section's Fire Marshall's Office, along with the Emergency Services Section's Training Office, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Office, the Health and Safety Office, the Scheduling Captain, and any special assignments are assigned the shift of Monday through Friday, five days a week from 08:00 to 16:30 hours (40 hours/week).⁷

Kelly Day Planning

A Kelly Day is a scheduled, non-compensated day off for Emergency Services Section employees.⁸ Kelly Days are managed by the Scheduling Office Captain and allow DFRS to maintain the average of a 48 hour work week.

On an annual basis, the Fire Chief sends a Special Order to DFRS employees for the ability to bid on their preferred Kelly Days for the upcoming Kelly Year. A Special Order notification is issued via email to announce the start of the process which includes submission instructions within Telestaff, dates, and allowances.

Based on the bidding process results, Telestaff automatically schedules Kelly Days, based on seniority and system implemented restrictions or station specific requirements. These restrictions ensure 1) senior staff members receive their preferred Kelly Days and 2) stations and apparatus are fully staffed throughout the year. Following the bid process, the Scheduling Office Captain, in cooperation with a union representative, revises assigned Kelly Days for balance across battalions, stations, and shifts prior to finalization in order to ensure balance and efficient assignment and disseminates to the workforce. Balanced schedules help ensure the stations are adequately staffed according to the scheduling requirements put forth by the County and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the formal agreement between the County and the Frederick County Professional Fire Fighters Association (Union).

Battalion Chiefs and EMS Supervisors are assigned a Kelly Day at the beginning of the pick process based upon their shift and assignment set by management. These are either Tuesday or Friday and rotate through personnel each year.

Employees who are transferred due to promotion will assume the Kelly Day of the promotional shift and station spot. Employees who are transferred to another shift through: a voluntary transfer, a request of a Kelly Day trade, or a promotion assume the Kelly Day assigned to their new position. Additionally, if a new position is created after the Kelly Day pick process or during the Kelly Year, it is assigned a Kelly Day based on allowance and balance of existing days per station per shift.

Planned and Discretionary Leave

DFRS employees accrue vacation leave bi-weekly based on their years of service.⁹ An accrued vacation "day" is equivalent to a 9.6-hour shift for an employee who works 48 hours in a pay period. Total annual vacation hours are based on the length of service as presented below.

1. 0-2 years: 105.6 hours per year (11 Days)
2. 2-10 years: 163.2 hours per year (17 Days)
3. 10+ years: 230.4 hours per year (24 Days)

For employees on a 40-hour pay period, or 8-hour shift, total annual vacation hours are based on the length of service as presented below.

⁷ DFRS SOP 2.01.01 Work Schedules

⁸ DFRS SOP 2.01.08 Kelly Day Picks

⁹ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Section 8 §8.7-A

1. 0-2 years: 88.0 hours per year (11 Days)
2. 2-10 years: 136.0 hours per year (17 Days)
3. 10+ years: 192.0 hours per year (24 Days)

Employees who go from a 48-hour pay period to a 40-hour pay period, or vice versa, will have their accrued hours adjusted to align with the hourly breakdown listed above.

Vacation-Planned Leave

Vacation-Planned (planned) leave is any leave agreed-upon in advance of the calendar year through the scheduling process, given the employee has sufficient leave allowance.¹⁰ The Vacation-Planned Leave process is similar to the Kelly Day process in that a Special Order is issued prior to the leave pick process to notify all applicable Emergency Services Section employees of the upcoming selection window. The leave pick process is a period when employees are assigned a request period and can enter all vacation/planned leave into Telestaff. A maximum of 15%, rounded up, of the employees rostered for duty per day and per band are allowed to be on leave. Bands are similar to job classifications and include: Battalion Chiefs; Station Officers (Captains and Lieutenants); and Technicians, Firefighters and Fire Medics. The actual number of rostered employees allowed leave in a day is calculated annually, at the beginning of the leave pick process. Telestaff approves the requests within the system following entry based upon predetermined rules. In the event an individual's leave impacts minimum staffing levels at their assigned location, adjustments to the schedule must be made and resources reallocated.

Vacation-Discretionary Leave

Vacation-Discretionary (discretionary) leave is defined as any vacation leave not reserved during the planned leave pick process, which utilizes the same allowance as planned leave. Vacation-Discretionary Leave must be requested no earlier than 90-days prior to the date requested and is considered the same as Vacation-Planned Leave should a slot be available for the requested day off. If an employee transfers to another station or shift, their discretionary leave is not guaranteed, unless the transfer was involuntary, as it may interfere with other employee's existing schedules and/or the County or MOU staffing requirements.

Cancelling Leave

Within Telestaff, employees may cancel requested leave up to 24 hours prior to the assigned leave. As of February 8, 2025, a cumulative total of 20 firefighters, paramedics, and officers are allowed to be on vacation on any shift on any day. Additionally, one Battalion Chief is allowed on vacation per shift per day. These limitations are evaluated annually. In the event an employee is unable to cancel the leave request themselves, their Battalion Chief may cancel the request within Telestaff. If the employee willingly relieves a holdover or recall¹¹ (refer to "*Overtime Scheduling*"), requested leave may be cancelled up to the morning of the scheduled leave. At the end of each calendar year, employees are eligible to carry over 30 vacation leave days to be used as planned or discretionary leave. This equates to either 288 or 240 hours for 48- and 40-hour work-week employees, respectively. Additionally, any vacation leave held by an employee in excess of 30 days at the end of the year is converted into sick leave for the following year based on the employee's respective work week hours. The 30-day threshold varies in the amount of hours based on the applicable workweek.

Trading Shifts

Employees may also trade scheduled shifts and days off to either save on or make up for the lack of accrued leave. Trades must be entered prior to the start of the shift and only employees which have the same

¹⁰ DFRS SOP 2.01.04 Planned and Discretionary Leave

¹¹ DFRS SOP 2.01.10 Mandatory Employee Holdover

credentials may trade shifts, unless the requirements are otherwise satisfied at the station (e.g., heavy apparatus driver may only trade with someone who is not licensed if another employee at the station is qualified). Telestaff automatically approves the swap if the specialty requirement is met. If the requirement is not met, or the specialties do not match, the swap will be denied. The employee may still find another employee with the correct requirements to trade the position with and start the process anew.

Overtime Scheduling

All full-time, non-exempt, uniformed employees who work in excess of their scheduled 144 hours within the three-week FLSA period are compensated for overtime at a rate of time and a half (an employee compensated \$30 an hour would be compensated \$45 for the overtime performed).¹²

All leave used by uniformed employees (e.g., vacation, discretionary, sick, bereavement, jury, etc.) is considered hours worked for the basis of calculating overtime. However, Kelly Days are not considered hours worked and are not paid out.

In order for a non-exempt, uniformed employee to be eligible to work field overtime, the employee must indicate their availability within the Telestaff schedule/calendar. This includes employees requesting to work overtime on their scheduled Kelly Day. Telestaff allows employees to request specific times to be called in for overtime, such as the 12-hour day shift or 12-hour night shift. Within Telestaff, an employee selects each day and shift(s) they are available for overtime.

If an employee requests sick leave, planned or discretionary leave, attends training, or a staffing shortage is identified, a staffing vacancy arises. DFRS's goal is to staff an additional 50% of Emergency Services Section employees as leave impact, also referred to as Detail Leave Impact Personnel (DLIP) or simply detail positions, in order to cover any vacancies without the use of overtime. Currently, DFRS is approximately 36 positions behind this current leave impact goal, at 29%. These staff are also referred to as Detail staff and are the first to be considered to fill any vacancies. The Scheduling Office Captain or Battalion Chief utilizes the Telestaff system to assign Detail staff to vacant positions. Once assigned, Detail personnel are responsible for identifying their assignments unless the assignment is a result of a transfer. In the case of a transfer, DFRS sends a notification to the Detail staff with the new assignment details such as station and shift.

If a staffing vacancy arises that cannot be filled by DLIP staff, such as a specialized position or a lack of available DLIP staff, the Scheduling Office Captain, or Battalion Chief, utilizes Telestaff to schedule overtime. The Telestaff system automatically orders available candidates according to the DFRS policy and the amended July 2023 – June 2025 (FY24 & 25) MOU:¹³

1. Personnel hired rank for rank with the least amount of accrued hours signed up available dayside or nightside on Kelly or staff preference day
2. Personnel hired rank for rank with the least amount of accrued hours signed up available dayside or nightside
3. Personnel qualified to "Act As" signed up available dayside or nightside on their Kelly or staff preference day
4. Personnel qualified to "Act As" signed up available dayside or nightside
5. Personnel qualified to "Work Down" signed up available dayside or nightside on their Kelly or staff preference day
6. Personnel qualified to "Work Down" signed up available either dayside or nightside

¹² Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025 Section 11 §11.1

¹³ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025 Section 11 §11.5-B-C

7. Mandatory Holdover/Recall List
8. Position hold overs once all other options are exhausted

In applying the above order, the following limitations are in effect:

1. Bargaining unit employees in the ranks of Captain or Lieutenant will be hired for overtime in officer positions on Engines, Trucks, and Rescue squads prior to bargaining unit employees in other rank classifications.
2. Bargaining unit employees in the rank classification of Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Firefighter III, and Firefighter Technician will be given priority to be hired on overtime in Firefighter positions until the list of qualified bargaining unit firefighters has been exhausted.¹⁴
3. In the absence of any available Fire Medics signed up to work, employees in the ranks of Captain/Medic and Lieutenant/Medic signed up to work will be hired to work medic unit positions prior to mandatory holdovers.
4. In the absence of any available Firefighters signed up to work, employees in the ranks of Captain and Lieutenant signed up to work will be hired to work in firefighter positions prior to mandatory holdovers.
5. The daily Holdover/Recall list will only be utilized once all the above procedures for hiring overtime have been exhausted.
6. With the exception of specialty needs or exigent circumstances, Advanced Life Support (ALS) providers will not be moved from their rotation to fill ALS positions as long as there is a bargaining unit employee signed up to work overtime.¹⁵

If more than one employee falls into a category, priority is granted in the following order:

- Employee with the least overtime worked year-to-date.
- If more than one employee satisfies #1 and 2, the employee with lowest seniority number or per seniority list.

The following are special considerations for filling vacancies:¹⁶

1. Fire Medic Station Officers and Fire Medic Technicians may be moved to cover medic vacancies if no other reasonable option is available.
2. On-duty personnel may need to be moved due to unique qualifications, availability, and specialty which then requires backfill to cover their position with overtime.
3. If an employee returns to work prior to the leave requested, the employee scheduled to fill their vacancy has the option of remaining on-duty to meet their 5-hour minimum and with the exception of a late arrival.
4. Employees are limited to 96 hours of overtime within the FLSA period, unless they receive management approval based on emergent requirements.

Holdovers

Telestaff also ranks employees who are qualified by the last holdover date greater than 5 hours. A holdover is a mandatory assignment of time an employee is required to stay at a station to maintain required staffing levels after a prior 24-hour shift. Each employee is assigned a holdover day based upon their Kelly Day assignment. An employee must be notified of their holdover prior to completing their shift. Disciplinary action can be taken for an employee who fails to holdover when notified. Alternatively, “backside” vacancies can be filled through a recall process. “Backside” refers to the final 12 hours of a shift from 18:00

¹⁴ All listed positions may also be categorized as medics.

¹⁵ DFRS currently considers limitation #6 in parallel with limitation #3 in order to satisfy minimum staffing requirements.

¹⁶ DFRS SOP 2.01.13 Telestaff Scheduling System

to 06:00. A recall typically occurs for specialized personnel who cannot be filled through a holdover or other methods. An employee shall only be recalled for up to 12 hours.

Based on the system ranked employees, the Scheduling Office Captain, or Battalion Chief, reviews employee assignments, positions, rank, impact of the request, and any special assignments or qualifications (e.g., certified medic, hazmat, etc.) and selects an employee to fill the vacancy. Once a replacement has been selected, the employee is notified of the request and the new assignment details. If an employee cancels an overtime offering, it is denoted within Telestaff, and the Scheduling Office Captain or Battalion Chief select another candidate based on the hiring rules. If DFRS identifies a candidate who has canceled requests for overtime on multiple occasions, the employee is withheld from future overtime opportunities or face disciplinary action.

DFRS policy states no employee shall work more than 48 consecutive hours and over 96 total overtime hours within a FLSA cycle without the permission of a Battalion Chief, Assistant Chief of Emergency Services, Deputy Chief of Emergency Services, or the DFRS Duty Officer. Any employee who has reached their maximum number of consecutive hours worked must have a minimum of 12 consecutive hours off duty. It is the employee's responsibility to track and reject any offers to work over their maximum consecutive hours.¹⁷ The Telestaff system automatically tracks the number of hours being worked to ensure no employee works more than 48 consecutive hours.

Contributors to Overtime

The following factors were identified as contributors to overtime for DFRS. All factors described below are necessary activities which DFRS must operate as a rescue services division.

1. Trainings
2. Leave
3. Specialized and Supervisory Positions

Trainings

Overtime may arise due to various types of training commitments. These include examples where an employee is requested to cover a vacancy created by an employee assigned training or if an employee is assigned training on their day off. These types of trainings include ongoing training, training instruction, and recruit trainings.¹⁸

Ongoing Training

Ongoing training is done for employees in order to remain compliant with DFRS standards¹⁹ or remain compliant with the standards or requirements of certifications they hold. The Telestaff system keeps a record of employees with certifications. The Battalion Chief of Special Operations is responsible for managing compliance with training certifications and requirements and requirements specific to special operations team members. When a training is required, the Program Manager of the respective specialty prepares the notification and submits it through the chain of command to the Chief. The Chief then sends the notification via email as a Special Order to all DFRS career employees. If the employee is off on the day they are assigned training, the employee earns overtime only for the time they participate. If an employee is assigned training on one of their regularly scheduled workdays, the Scheduling Office Captain covers their vacancy with another employee until they return to duty. If the training is held for a single day but has multiple occurrences, an employee may request to change their assigned training date with another. For an

¹⁷ DFRS SOP 2.01.09 Consecutive Work Hours

¹⁸ DFRS SOP 2.01.12 Training and Education Scheduling

¹⁹ DFRS SOP 7.00.07 Peer Fitness Trainer Policy

employee to change their training date, the employee requests a change from the Program Manager, who either approves or denies the change.

Additionally, DFRS holds specialty team trainings for the following teams and their associated members:

1. Haz Mat (60 personnel)
2. Technical Rescue (60 personnel)
3. Water Rescue (60 personnel)
4. Tactical EMS (8 personnel)

The Haz Mat, Technical Rescue, and Water Rescue team trainings occur quarterly and last eight hours each, for a total of 32 hours per year, per person. Similarly, EMT's and Medics require additional training hours over a 3- and 2-year period, respectively. The Tactical EMS team trains with the Frederick Police Department on a monthly basis. The tactical medics support SWAT during high threat law enforcement missions that require a high level of coordination such as hostage rescues, criminal barricades, high risk warrant services, and civil disturbances. Given the nature of the varied missions and lack of exposure to these types of operations on a day-to-day basis, the medics train monthly with the officers to maintain readiness and proficiency. Finally, DFRS also maintains a special Peer Support Team that trains regularly based on division needs.

Training Instruction

At times, employees may be required to instruct trainings. The training instructors may be either uniformed or non-uniformed personnel based on the training type (e.g., if the course provides certification). If an employee is to instruct a training on one of their regularly scheduled workdays, the Scheduling Office Captain must cover their vacancy with another employee until they return to duty.

Recruit Trainings

Recruit trainings also contribute to overtime. DFRS holds two to four recruit classes per year, each lasting approximately 28 weeks. DFRS utilizes Recruit Class Commanders who are assigned to the class for the duration of the training. These instructors are either detailed to the academy or hired through overtime to teach. For each recruit class, DFRS employees may be requested to instruct or assist in various training activities, some of which may require additional resources than others (e.g., live structure fire trainings).²⁰ The need for instructors and supporting employees is different depending on the topic being covered and the instruction method (e.g., lecture or practical). However, DFRS has established a structured schedule in an attempt to achieve optimal student to instructor ratios. Additional employees assisting with recruit trainings on days where they are off, in order to limit the number of vacancies that are needed to fill, may result in overtime. If an employee assists a recruit training on one of their regularly scheduled workdays, the Scheduling Office Captain must cover their vacancy with another employee until they return to duty.

Paramedic Trainings

Paramedic classes also contribute to overtime similar to recruit trainings. These are smaller in class size, with approximately 10 to 16 students, but take longer to complete. Paramedic classes occur once a year and last 11 months before going through a designate process, where candidates are released as independent providers for an additional four to six months.

Leave

In the event an employee is away on planned or discretionary leave, the Scheduling Office Captain, or Battalion Chief, utilizes Telestaff to fill the vacant position according to the process described above.

²⁰ DFRS SOP 7.00.05 Conducting Fire Training Evolutions in Acquired Structures

Because of this, overtime may be required to fill the vacancy. As of July 2023, all sick leave is included in the calculation for hours worked. All hours worked outside of an employee's normally scheduled shift are compensated at one and a half times their normal pay rate.

In addition to planned and discretionary leave, DFRS employees are eligible to take sick leave. Employees can accrue a total of 15 sick days per year, accrued monthly.²¹ Sick leave is allowed for the sickness, disability, or medical appointment of either the employee or their child, dependent, spouse, parent, or parent-in-law. Employees must call the DFRS sick leave telephone number no later than one hour before their scheduled shift.

All sick leave is classified as "sick unverified" until documentation from a licensed medical professional is provided to a direct supervisor, who records the leave as "sick verified." Employees receive disciplinary action if they use more than four unverified sick leave periods (e.g., consecutive hours, days, etc.) in one calendar year. Those who have not accrued enough sick leave to cover the amount of time requested receive unpaid leave.²²

Each week, a Telestaff report of all employees with "sick unverified" balances is distributed to the Battalion Chiefs for review and follow-up, if needed. If there is reasonable cause to believe that an employee is abusing sick leave, the employee may be required to submit documentation from a medical professional that verifies all sickness or injury, regardless of the number of sick leave periods each year. Further or continuous abuse may result in disciplinary action.

Absences of more than seven consecutive calendar days are documented under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and require associated medical documentation. DFRS tracks all employees on FMLA or other extended leave through manual spreadsheets, which are held and maintained by the Health and Safety Office. Employees must formally request and receive management approval to take FMLA leave.

Lastly, DFRS employees are also eligible for the following, and less common and impactful, leave categories:²³

1. Paid jury leave with proof of verification.
2. Paid military leave of up to 288 hours with proof of service.
3. Paid bereavement leave.
4. Paid administrative leave for pending investigations.
5. Paid County observed holidays.²⁴
6. Union administrative leave.

Specialized and Supervisory Positions

Due to the specific skills, training, certifications, or knowledge necessary for specialized positions, substitutes for employees unable to work their shifts must have similar qualifications. Because there are fewer of these specialized personnel compared to non-specialized firefighters, replacements may need to be sourced through holdovers, acting roles, or overtime, all of which would be paid at overtime rates. The Scheduling Office Captain, or Battalion Chief, utilizes Telestaff to staff to minimum requirements or fill vacancies, which may result in overtime, according to the process described above in *Overtime Scheduling*.

²¹ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Section 8 §8.3-A

²² DFRS SOP 2.01.07 Use of Sick Leave

²³ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Section 8

²⁴ DFRS SOP 2.01.06 Holiday Compensation

Telestaff and Infor Timekeeping

DFRS and The County utilize three separate systems for employee time entry and payroll recordkeeping:

1. Telestaff: DFRS's staffing & scheduling system.
2. Infor Workforce Management (WFM): The County's time & attendance system
3. Infor Lawson/S3: The County's payroll system

Employees are required to enter and approve their time in Infor WFM by noon Monday following the pay period. Employees are responsible for verifying their time and attendance in Telestaff is accurate in working time. Each employee, or their supervisor, has until 10:00am the following day from any of their shifts to record their time and adjust any changes to their shift within Telestaff. Direct supervisors of Emergency Services Section employees review time and attendance within Telestaff to ensure it is consistent with the employee's assigned staffing schedule and Infor WFM. Once complete, the supervisor verifies the timesheet and signs off on the hours worked by the employee in Infor. Based on the automated workflow built within Infor, approved timesheets may continue to move upwards to their direct supervisors for subsequent review and approval. If a discrepancy is discovered while a supervisor is reviewing an employee's time within Infor, the supervisor is responsible for inquiring with the employee the reason for the discrepancy or any necessary correction.

While the County operates on a two-week payroll cycle, DFRS utilizes a separate three-week FLSA reporting cycle in which employees are assigned to work at least 144 hours. Any time worked over the 144 hours is recorded as overtime (*refer to Overtime Scheduling*). Based on automated rules set up within the Infor WFM workflow, the system automatically codes any time over the 144 hours worked as overtime, excluding the recorded Kelly Days. All overtime is paid out at time and a half and coded as Firefighter's Overtime (FOT) within Infor.

At the end of the pay period, County Payroll Department exports the time recorded within Infor through the S3 reporting system. The reports only include paid hours and non-paid hours, such as Kelly Days, are excluded. The exported data is remapped to the S3 system using an internal mapping tool, which then takes the time entry data and calculates pay based on pay codes tracked within Infor.

If any adjustments to Telestaff are required that the employee cannot address, an employee's Station Officer has the ability to adjust any of their station's employees until 10:00am the following day. Battalion Chiefs or higher have the ability to go further back within the open payroll period to make any changes, if necessary. If the payroll period has closed, the employee submits a Request for Payroll Adjustment form through the chain of command. This request must include a detailed explanation why the modification was not accurately reflected in the proper pay period and, if the modification was due to error, the reason for the error and future preventative measures. A photocopy of the station logbook is also provided with the request.²⁵

Objectives

During the testing phase, SC&H developed audit objectives and identified the steps necessary to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the onboarding and offboarding process. The following objectives for the testing phase were developed based upon the understanding gained during the planning phase and approved by the Director - IIAA.

- A. Evaluate the Division of Fire and Rescue Services' staffing, overtime management, and overtime monitoring functions to identify (**Preliminary Objective 1, 6, & 8**):

²⁵ DFRS SOP 2.01.14 Telestaff Payroll Reconciliation

1. Process alignments with policies and procedures, and consistencies between stations.
 2. Opportunities for realigned procedures across shifts and stations, as applicable, that align with policies and procedures.
 3. Opportunities for process efficiencies.
 4. Overtime contributors and opportunities to reduce overtime.
- B. Evaluate staffing and overtime data to identify the volume, frequency, and drivers of regular working and overtime hours. **(Preliminary Objective 6 & 7)**
- C. Evaluate minimum staffing requirements to determine if opportunities exist to reduce those requirements while still aligning with County protocol. **(Preliminary Objective 4)**

Preliminary Objectives 2, 3, and 5 were performed during the planning phase, prior to conducting fieldwork testing procedures.

Scope

The audit was initiated in March, 2024 and focused on the Division of Fire and Rescue's Overtime and Staffing processes. The period in scope included calls, hours incurred and contributors to overtime in the calendar years 2019, 2022 and 2023. Calendar years 2020 and 2021 were excluded due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Methodology and Approach

SC&H conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions.

In order to obtain the necessary documentation to appropriately perform and conclude upon the objectives of this audit, SC&H conducted the following procedures.

Creation of Audit Program

Based on procedures performed during the planning and risk assessment phase, SC&H developed an audit program to achieve the objectives, which was reviewed and approved by the Director- Internal Audit Division prior to implementation. This included detailed steps to address each objective with the goal of determining the efficiency and impact of scheduling and contributors to overtime, as well as identifying opportunities for improvement.

The approved program was then used as a guide throughout the audit process to achieve the objectives.

Execution of Audit Program

SC&H executed the audit plan by completing the following tasks.

Objective A

Evaluate the Division of Fire and Rescue Services' staffing, overtime management, and overtime monitoring functions to identify:

- Process alignments with policies and procedures, and consistencies between stations.
- Opportunities for realigned procedures across shifts and stations, as applicable, that align with policies and procedures.
- Opportunities for process efficiencies.

- Overtime contributors and opportunities to reduce overtime.

Summary Procedures
<p>A.1. Evaluated the current staffing methodology utilized by DFRS and determined if processes align with documented policies and procedures, and throughout stations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtained and reviewed established policy and procedure documentation related to staffing and overtime processes at DFRS. 2. Selected a sample of stations and inquired with personnel regarding overtime processes, including the impact of minimum staffing on overtime costs. 3. Reviewed current staffing and overtime at the station for alignment with policy and procedure and document observations. 4. Documented instances of alignment and misalignment between policies/procedures and stations, and opportunities to improve current processes.
<p>A.2. Evaluated the processes to record and approve overtime and determine if processes align with documented policies and procedures, and throughout stations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inquired with sampled station personnel regarding staffing and overtime processes, including daily, weekly, and bi-weekly monitoring, recording, and approval of scheduled hours and overtime, whether performed through software or manually. 2. Documented instances of alignment and misalignment between policies/procedures and stations, and opportunities to improve current processes.
<p>A.3. Evaluated the periodic monitoring of overtime costs, contributors, and utilization to determine how and if overtime costs are being reviewed and considered in decision making.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtained the most recent Hold schedule and a population of all holds from calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023. 2. Obtained a population of employees exhibiting patterns of sick leave and inquired with DFRS management regarding overtime processes, including monitoring of overtime costs, contributors, and utilization. 3. The Telestaff functionality to identify employees with patterns of sick leave was not in place to be observed. 4. Selected a sample of employees and perform analytics/inquiries to determine the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Amount of overtime that resulted from the sick leave b. Verified vs. unverified leave c. How much employee holds contributed to overtime d. Any actions taken to prevent abuse
<p>A.4. Evaluated the annual budget process to determine wage and overtime expenditures in order to determine how staffing and overtime levels impact decision making.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtained budget to actual costs related to payroll and overtime for calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023. 2. Inquired with personnel regarding the process for determining/quantifying salary and overtime budgets. 3. Reviewed budget projected costs and determine if they aligned/agreed with actual salary and overtime costs incurred. 4. Inquired with management and document results about the monitoring, tracking, and updates for salary and overtime costs throughout the year to determine if salary and overtime costs are being reasonably determined.

Objective B

Evaluate staffing and overtime data to identify the volume, frequency, and drivers of regular working and overtime hours.

Summary Procedures

B.1. Identified key contributors and trends within staffing and overtime data in order to determine key contributors to overtime.

1. Obtained a population of employee payroll hours recorded in Infor for calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023.
2. Obtained a population of employee payroll hours recorded in Telestaff for calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023.
3. Obtained a coding matrix to align Infor hours to Telestaff hours.
4. Catalogued data sets, including available fields for potential analyses.
5. Performed the following analyses:
 - a. Reconciliation of hours in Telestaff to hours in Infor.
 - b. Key contributors to overtime (e.g., sick, vacation, training, etc.).

B.2. Evaluated response times and trends to determine if DFRS response times are consistent with industry standards.

1. Obtained a population of all calls received and completed by the division and each station for calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023.
2. Utilizing the population provided, performed analyses including:
 - a. Total number of calls answered
 - b. Average response time
 - c. Response time, per call
 - d. Average response times during peak hours
 - e. Average response times during non-peak hours
 - f. Types of calls received by the division
 - g. Count of calls by call type
 - h. Average response time by call type
 - i. Vehicle types used during each call
 - j. Count of vehicles used during each call

B.3. Evaluated current trends in employees on extended leave in order to understand impact on current staffing procedures.

1. Obtained the most recent staffing schedule by station and shift.
2. Obtained the most recent leave spot assignments by employee.
3. Obtained a current population of employees on extended leave (e.g., FMLA, workers compensation, military, etc. (criteria/categories to be confirmed)) including the following information:
 - a. Employee Name
 - b. Employee ID
 - c. Employee Position
 - d. Employee Station
 - e. Employee Shift
 - f. Leave Type (e.g., FMLA, workers compensation, military, etc.)
 - g. Leave Start Date
 - h. Leave End Date
4. Quantified the number of employees on extended leave as a percentage of the DFRS workforce.
5. Performed an analysis to determine if leave is resulting in over- or under-staffing, contributing to overtime.

B.4. Evaluated staffing overfill and physical assets, such as location and quantity of firehouses and vehicles, by station in order to identify instances where vehicles, staffing levels, and service area demand do not appear to align.

Summary Procedures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtained the most recent staffing schedule by station and shift. 2. Obtained a population of employee payroll hours for calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023. 3. Obtained a population of all stations and their apparatus from DFRS personnel. 4. Utilizing the populations provided, performed analyses including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Vehicle count by station, battalion, and division b. Minimum staffing based on vehicle type by station, battalion, and division c. Total number of detail employees per station and per shift. d. Utilization of detail employees by DFRS.
<p>B.5. Evaluated the current Kelly Day assignment utilized by DFRS to identify potential scheduling conflicts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain a population of Kelly Days by each employee. 2. Utilizing the population provided, performed analyses including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> b. The Kelly Day assignment per shift and per station. c. Any scheduling conflicts that arise from conflicting Kelly Days.
<p>B.6. Evaluated student-to-instructor ratios for recruit classes in order to determine if excessive instructors are contributing to overtime.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtained a population of employee payroll hours for calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023. 2. Obtained records of all recruit trainings held for calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023. At a minimum, these records should include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recruit Attendees b. Dates and times of associated lessons c. DFRS Employee Instructors 3. Through inquiry, understood DFRS's optimal student-to-instructor ratio. 4. Utilizing the population provided, performed analyses including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Actual student-to-instructor ratio b. Overtime incurred by Instructors

Objective C

Evaluate minimum staffing requirements to determine if opportunities exist to reduce those requirements while still aligning with County protocol.

Summary Procedures
<p>C.1. Conducted a benchmarking exercise to evaluate staffing method/strategy opportunities to provide the County with minimum staffing alternatives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identified peer organizations/fire departments. 2. Prepared questions, based on information learned/documented throughout the audit, to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inquire and learn about their minimum staffing requirements, protocol, successes, challenges, etc. b. Request available policies, procedures, etc. 3. Contacted organizations (e.g., via survey, email, calls, etc.) and perform benchmarking procedures.²⁶ 4. Compiled and organized results, documented pertinent information about each strategy, and compared to the current strategy used by DFRS. 5. Documented results, identifying instances of potential revisions to County strategies, and opportunities to improve current processes.

²⁶ Only one of the nine organizations that were contacted provided a response.

Data Analysis

As part of the audit, SC&H performed multiple data analyses to identify trends related to scheduling and overtime activities. See below for examples of the analysis performed.

Salary and Overtime Budget-to-Actual Analysis

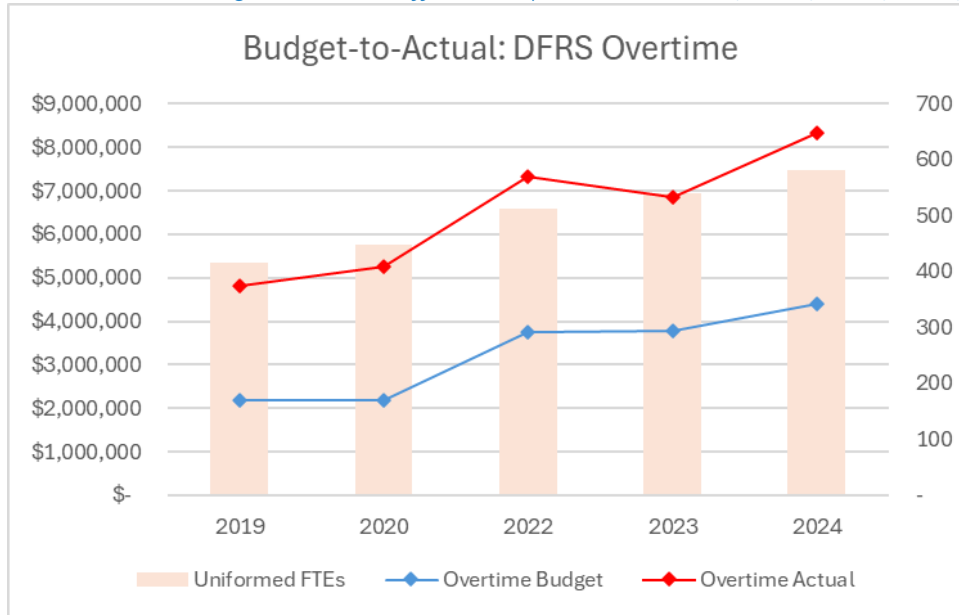
SC&H reviewed budget projected costs to determine if they agreed with actual salary and overtime costs incurred. Based on the data and analysis, overtime is under-budgeted for all departments/ operating segments identified. The table and graph presented below compares budgeted salaries and overtime costs to actual costs incurred during the scope period (FY2019, 2022, & 2023).

Table 1 – DFRS Budget to Actual Differences (Fiscal Years 2019, 2022 & 2023)

FY19	Budget	Actual	Variance
Overtime	\$2,173,048	\$4,811,664	\$(2,638,616)
Administrative Services	-	9,227	(9,227)
Fire & EMS Operations	2,113,155	4,731,710	(2,618,555)
Fire Marshal	17,078	4,853	12,225
Office of the Fire Chief	-	128	(128)
Training	42,815	65,746	(22,931)
Salaries & Wages	\$27,811,806	\$27,208,244	\$603,562
Administrative Services	418,784	438,823	(20,039)
Fire & EMS Operations	26,138,518	25,480,801	657,717
Fire Marshal	345,609	340,238	5,371
Office of the Fire Chief	342,767	371,073	(28,306)
Training	566,128	577,310	(11,182)
FY22	Budget	Actual	Variance
Overtime	\$3,759,478	\$7,071,280	\$(3,311,802)
Administrative Services	-	12,615	(12,615)
Fire & EMS Operations	3,698,942	6,796,993	(3,098,051)
Fire Marshal	17,078	101,630	(84,552)
Office of the Fire Chief	-	-	-
Training	\$43,458	160,042	(116,584)
Salaries & Wages	\$38,159,479	\$37,002,226	\$1,157,253
Administrative Services	952,423	691,433	260,990
Fire & EMS Operations	35,752,703	34,918,365	834,338
Fire Marshal	452,932	410,094	42,838
Office of the Fire Chief	372,828	394,570	(21,742)
Training	628,593	587,765	40,828
FY23	Budget	Actual	Variance
Overtime	\$3,770,356	\$6,620,716	\$(2,850,360)
Administrative Services	-	12,296	(12,296)
Fire & EMS Operations	3,707,701	6,372,352	(2,664,651)
Fire Marshal	17,676	87,788	(70,112)
Office of the Fire Chief	-	1,276	(1,276)
Training	44,979	147,004	(102,025)
Salaries & Wages	\$42,114,377	\$40,055,267	\$2,059,110
Administrative Services	1,668,944	652,567	1,016,377
Fire & EMS Operations	38,771,468	37,642,761	1,128,707
Fire Marshal	475,006	436,264	38,742
Office of the Fire Chief	467,091	492,473	(25,382)
Training	731,868	831,201	(99,333)

Source: Data provided by DFRS

Chart 1 – DFRS Budget to Actual Differences (Fiscal Years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, & 2023)



Source: Data provided by DFRS

County-Owned Apparatus Review

SC&H reviewed current career employee and career apparatus staffing, as well as calls received during calendar years 2019, 2022, & 2023 for the following analytics:

1. Vehicle count by station, battalion, and division
2. Minimum staffing based on vehicle type by station, battalion, and division
3. Total number of detail employees per station and per shift.
4. Utilization of detail employees by DFRS.

DFRS currently has 62 unique career-owned apparatus, or vehicles, with an average of approximately 2 to 3 per station. The following provides a breakdown of the apparatus count by station²⁷:

1. 5 apparatus: #29, #31
2. 4 apparatus: #3, #23, #33
3. 3 apparatus: #1, #2, #5, #8, #12, #17
4. 2 apparatus: #4, #7, #14, #15, #16, #20, #25, #30
5. 1 apparatus: #6, #10, #11, #22, #24, #28

Additionally, DFRS employees fall into a hierarchy of battalions, stations, and shifts, respectively. DFRS operates three battalions across 25 stations and four shifts at those stations.

A detailed breakdown quantifying apparatus by type and ownership is included below.

Table 2 – County and Volunteer Fire & EMS Apparatus (As of February 7, 2023)

Primary Vehicle Type ²⁸	County Owned	Volunteer Owned	Total
Engine	17	20	37
Aerial Ladder	5	3	8
Rescue Squad	-	10	10

²⁷ DFRS utilizes 26 total stations. However, apparatus and personnel assigned to Station #19 (Brunswick Ambulance) are now based out of Station #5, resulting in a total of 25 stations currently in operation.

²⁸ List is not inclusive of all vehicles in the fleet

Primary Vehicle Type ²⁸	County Owned	Volunteer Owned	Total
Combination Rescue/Engine	1	2	3
Combination Engine/Tanker	-	7	7
Dedicated Water Tanker	4	6	10
Brush Fire Truck	-	24	24
Ambulance	21	24	45
Medic Unit	13	-	13

Source: Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services Fire – Rescue Service Plan CY2023 – CY2028

Kelly Day Mix Analysis

Current station staffing was compared to Kelly day assignments in order to identify the appearance of scheduling conflicts. Analyses included the blend of Kelly days across positions, stations, days of the week, and battalion.

Table 3 – DFRS Kelly Day Counts by Position, Shift, and Date (As of July 20, 2024²⁹)

Station	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Medic	6	6	6	9	8	6	6
A Shift	2	2	2	3	3	2	2
B Shift	2	2	3	3	2	2	2
C Shift	2	2	1	3	3	2	2
Station Officer	12	11	12	13	12	13	12
A Shift	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
B Shift	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
C Shift	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
D Shift	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Technician/ FF	54	56	61	53	51	65	52
A Shift	18	18	19	16	14	21	17
B Shift	18	20	19	17	17	21	17
C Shift	18	15	20	18	18	21	18
D Shift	-	3	3	2	2	2	-
Grand Total	72	73	79	75	71	84	70

Source: Data provided by DFRS

Telestaff Overtime Hours Analysis

Analyses were performed to quantify the total overtime recorded by employees. To do this, the total overtime worked by the employee was compared to the total hours worked by the employee. Additionally, analyses were performed to review and verify how much employee holdovers contributed to overtime. A detailed breakdown of total hours attributed to all applicable Telestaff codes that correlate to overtime incurred for calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023 is included below.

²⁹ The data provided was for a point in time. Kelly days are organized and assigned on an annual basis but remain fluid and change as hiring, promotions, and terminations occur.

Table 4 – Telestaff Overtime Data (Calendar Years 2019, 2022 & 2023)

Telestaff Overtime Code	2019 Total	2022 Total	2023 Total	Cumulative Total
EWS - Acting (EWSACT)	99.00	1,791.00	2,321.42	4,211.42
EWS - Acting3 (EWSACT3)			0.75	0.75
EWS - Acting4 (EWSACT4)			1.50	1.50
EWS - ATR Training (EWSATR)	324.00	1,037.00	1,658.50	3,019.50
EWS - BC Collateral Duty (Field Ops) (EWSBCColl)		552.58	423.50	976.08
EWS - CDL Instructor (EWS CDL)			1,182.75	1,182.75
EWS - Court (EWSCT)	29.75	43.00	31.00	103.75
EWS - CSS (EWS CSS)	134.75			134.75
EWS - EMS Training (EWSEMS)	1,065.75	4,569.25	2,773.50	8,408.50
EWS - Event (EWSEV)	1,653.25	606.18	760.92	3,020.35
EWS - Event Plus 3 (EWSEvent3)	319.25	129.50	103.25	552.00
EWS - Hazmat Training (EWSHM)	1,195.75	1,398.00	1,483.50	4,077.25
EWS - Honor Guard (EWSHG)	272.25	601.25	614.50	1,488.00
EWS - Medical (EWSMD)	643.25	943.63	1,029.92	2,616.80
EWS - Meeting (EWSMT)	602.25	1,081.50	707.75	2,391.50
EWS - Project (EWSPR)	2,811.75	4,676.08	5,424.83	12,912.66
EWS - PSTF Instructor (EWSPF)	9,661.63	8,620.50	15,617.00	33,899.13
EWS - PSTF Instructor SA3 (EWSInst3)	555.75	533.00	525.75	1,614.50
EWS - Special Training (EWSSPTRN)		1,840.50	5,166.08	7,006.58
EWS - Special Training Backfill (EWSSPTRNBF)			24.75	24.75
EWS - Special Training Instructor (EWSSPTRINS)		201.75	946.50	1,148.25
EWS - TEMS Training (EWSTEMS)	620.50	394.00	522.25	1,536.75
EWS - Training Misc. (EWSMisc)	696.50	1,631.58	1,313.60	3,641.68
EWS - WRT Training (EWSWRT)	1,587.75	1,214.50	2,118.92	4,921.17
Extra Worked Shift 3 (EWS3)	18,316.42	12,806.08	6,911.32	38,033.82
Extra Worked Shift 4 (EWS4)		2,982.17	1,674.25	4,656.42
Extra Worked Shift2 (ExtraWS)	101,047.85	79,835.38	97,814.18	278,697.41
Holdover (HOLD)	19,217.78	8,551.92	9,899.45	37,669.15
Holdover Medic SA3 (HOLD SA3)	2,007.00	783.00	351.75	3,141.75
Holdover Medic SA4 (HOLD SA4)			29.00	29.00
Holdover Position Hold (POS HOLD)		838.75	1,017.33	1,856.08
Holdover Position Hold SA3 (POSHOLDSA3)		10.25	38.00	48.25
Holdover Position Hold SA4 (POSHOLDSA4)		144.50	66.00	210.50
Holdover Position Recall (RECALL)		50.00	40.17	90.17
Holdover Position Recall SA4 (RECALL SA4)		11.00		11.00
Total	162,862.18	137,877.85	162,593.89	463,333.92

Source: Unaudited DFRS Telestaff data

The following is a consolidated summary of overtime hours recorded within Telestaff during calendar years 2019, 2022 & 2023 as detailed above:

Table 5 – Summarized Telestaff Overtime Data (Calendar Years 2019, 2022 & 2023)

Summarized Telestaff Overtime Code(s)	2019 Total Hours	2022 Total Hours	2023 Total Hours
EWS - Extra Work Shift	119,364.27	95,623.63	106,399.75
EWS - Acting	99.00	1,791.00	2,323.67
EWS - BC Collateral Duty	-	552.58	423.50
EWS - Court	29.75	43.00	31.00
EWS - CSS	134.75	-	-
EWS - Event	1,972.5	735.68	864.17
EWS - Honor Guard	272.25	601.25	614.50
EWS - Instructor	10,217.38	9,355.25	18,272.00

Summarized Telestaff Overtime Code(s)	2019 Total Hours	2022 Total Hours	2023 Total Hours
EWS - Medical	643.25	943.63	1,029.92
EWS - Meeting	602.25	1,081.5	707.75
EWS - Project	2,811.75	4,676.08	5,424.83
EWS - Training	5,490.25	12,084.83	15,061.10
Holdover	19,217.78	8,551.92	9,899.45
Holdover Medic	2,007.00	783.00	380.75
Holdover Position Hold	-	993.50	1,121.33
Total	162,862.18	137,877.85	162,593.89

Source: Unaudited DFRS Telestaff data

Telestaff Training Hours Analysis

Data analyses were performed to quantify the impact to overtime from DFRS trainings. From the data and analysis, each training session adds around one hour of overtime per day for an instructor during the training period. A detailed breakdown of total hours attributed to all applicable Telestaff codes that correlate to trainings for calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023 is included below. (Refer to Table 5)

Table 6 – Telestaff Training Data (Calendar Years 2019, 2022 & 2023)

Telestaff Training & Instructor Code(s)	2019 Total	2022 Total	2023 Total	Cumulative Total
Detailed - ATR Training (DATR)	771.00	453.25	291.00	1,515.25
Detailed - EMS Training (DEM)	943.00	385.00	1,080.25	2,408.25
Detailed - Hazmat Training (DHM)	509.50	264.00	588.50	1,362.00
Detailed - Paramedic Class (DPC)	334.50		54.00	388.50
Detailed - PSTF Instructor (DTF)	1,638.50	468.00	484.00	2,590.50
Detailed - PSTF Instructor Plus 3 (DInst3)	2.50	16.00		18.50
Detailed - Special Training Instructor (DTFSTRINST)		10.00	274.25	284.25
Detailed - TEMS Training (DTEMS)	715.00	916.00	887.25	2,518.25
Detailed - Training (DTR)	970.25	1,517.50	1,336.75	3,824.50
Detailed - WRT Training (DWRT)	439.75	24.00	412.25	876.00
EWS - ATR Training (EWSATR)	324.00	1,037.00	1,658.50	3,019.50
EWS - CDL Instructor (EWS CDL)			1,182.75	1,182.75
EWS - EMS Training (EWSEMS)	1,065.75	4,569.25	2,773.50	8,408.50
EWS - Hazmat Training (EWSHM)	1,195.75	1,398.00	1,483.50	4,077.25
EWS - PSTF Instructor (EWSPF)	9,661.63	8,620.50	15,617.00	33,899.13
EWS - PSTF Instructor SA3 (EWSInst3)	555.75	533.00	525.75	1,614.50
EWS - Special Training (EWSSPTRN)		1,840.50	5,166.08	7,006.58
EWS - Special Training Backfill (EWSSPTRNBF)			24.75	24.75
EWS - Special Training Instructor (EWSSPTRINS)		201.75	946.50	1,148.25
EWS - TEMS Training (EWSTEMS)	620.50	394.00	522.25	1,536.75
EWS - Training Misc. (EWSMisc)	696.50	1,631.58	1,313.60	3,641.68
EWS - WRT Training (EWSWRT)	1,587.75	1,214.50	2,118.92	4,921.17
Total	22,031.63	25,493.83	38,741.35	86,266.81

Source: Unaudited DFRS Telestaff data

The following is a consolidated summary of training and instruction hours recorded within Telestaff during calendar years 2019, 2022 & 2023 as detailed above:

Table 7 – Summarized Telestaff Training Data (Calendar Years 2019, 2022 & 2023)

Summarized Telestaff Training Code(s)	2019 Total Hours	2022 Total Hours	2023 Total Hours
Detailed - Training Codes	4,683.00	3,559.75	4,650.00
Detailed - Instructor Codes	1,641.00	494.00	758.25
EWS - Training Codes	5,490.25	12,084.83	15,061.10
EWS - Instructor Codes	10,217.38	9,355.25	18,272.00
Total	22,031.63	25,493.83	38,741.35

Source: Unaudited DFRS Telestaff data

Telestaff Leave Hours Analysis

Analyses were performed to compare total overtime to total sick time. A breakdown of total hours attributed to all applicable Telestaff codes that correlate to leave, not only limited to sick leave, for calendar years 2019, 2022, and 2023 is included below.

Table 8 – Telestaff Leave Data (Calendar Years 2019, 2022 & 2023)

Telestaff Leave Code	2019 Total	2022 Total	2023 Total	Cumulative Total
Leave - Absent Without (AWOL)	0.83	70.08	48.00	118.91
Leave - Administrative (L-ADM)		21.75	202.50	224.25
Leave - Administrative Event (ADM-EVENT)		590.00	780.00	1,370.00
Leave - Bereavement (BRV)	1,081.48	1,147.30		2,228.78
Leave - Bereavement (Immediate) (BRV-I)		100.80	1,042.15	1,142.95
Leave - Bereavement (Other) (BRV-O)		21.60	275.00	296.60
Leave - COVID-Admin (ADM-Covid)		536.50		536.50
Leave - COVID-Sick (SICK-Covid)		12,254.00	1,064.00	13,318.00
Leave - Discretionary ** DO NOT USE ** (A)	48.00			48.00
Leave - FMLA - Workers-Compensation (FMWC)	336.00		1,105.00	1,441.00
Leave - FMLA ANN (FMLAA)	777.85	594.00	720.00	2,091.85
Leave - FMLA SICK (FMLA-SICK)	11,619.10	17,013.50	21,887.40	50,520.00
Leave - Jury (J)	8.25	24.00	32.50	64.75
Leave - Military (MIL)	1,127.00	1,082.00	1,317.60	3,526.60
Leave - Military No Pay (MNP)	804.00	2,304.00	925.40	4,033.40
Leave - No Pay (LNP)	66.10	250.90	69.12	386.12
Leave - Planned Annual ** DO NOT USE ** (AP)	21,034.75			21,034.75
Leave - SICK (SICK)			68.25	68.25
Leave - Sick Unverified (SUN)	11,418.83	17,831.65	18,780.90	48,031.38
Leave - Sick Verified (SVN)	18,654.06	17,492.70	20,641.62	56,788.38
Leave - Union Leave - Peer (UL-Peer)			12.50	12.50
Leave - Union Leave (UL)	30.00	61.00	988.00	1,079.00
Leave - Vacation Discretionary (HQ) (VAC-D-HQ) ³⁰			1,109.25	1,109.25
Leave - Vacation Discretionary (VAC-D)	20,656.80	20,546.40	27,598.05	68,801.25
Leave - Vacation Planned (VAC-P)	26,979.75	65,686.43	64,041.05	156,707.23
Leave Workers - Compensation (WKC)	360.00	3,362.00	1,980.00	5,702.00
Leave-EFMLEA (EFMLEA)		24.00		24.00
Total	115,002.80	161,014.61	164,688.29	440,705.70

Source: Unaudited DFRS Telestaff data

Top Overtime Earners Analysis

Analyses were performed to identify employees with the largest overtime accumulated by both hours and compensation. A sample of 25 of the top overtime earners was selected and analyses were performed in

30 The Leave – Vacation Discretionary (HQ) (VAC-D-HQ) category only applies to office personnel and does not contribute to station overtime.

order to determine their salary, position, overtime hours, overtime compensation, percentage of overtime to their salary, and their relative ranking for the given calendar years of 2019, 2022, and 2023. A summary of the results are presented below.

Table 9 – Top Infor Overtime Earners (Calendar Years 2019, 2022 & 2023)

Calendar Year 2019					
Ranking	Position	Salary	Overtime Hours	Overtime Pay	Overtime to Salary
1	Fire Medic	\$ 69,696.31	3,415.00	\$ 76,608.17	110%
2	Battalion Chief	\$ 118,507.08	1,400.50	\$ 74,804.21	63%
3	Medic Captain	\$ 113,121.47	777.25	\$ 71,657.13	63%
4	Fire Technician	\$ 78,635.48	2,514.50	\$ 70,653.89	90%
5	Fire Medic	\$ 62,803.10	2,640.18	\$ 69,358.27	110%
6	Fire Medic	\$ 69,696.31	1,301.25	\$ 63,719.72	91%
7	Fire Fighter	\$ 64,855.81	2,019.34	\$ 63,384.95	98%
8	Fire Medic	\$ 52,383.80	2,168.75	\$ 61,390.11	117%
9	Fire Fighter	\$ 64,855.81	3,364.50	\$ 55,621.13	86%
10	Fire Technician	\$ 64,848.58	2,166.50	\$ 55,406.10	85%
11	Fire Fighter	\$ 62,709.71	1,698.90	\$ 53,566.02	85%
12	Lieutenant	\$ 76,819.39	586.25	\$ 53,431.53	70%
13	Captain	\$ 84,895.20	1,421.25	\$ 52,543.42	62%
14	Fire Medic Lieutenant	\$ 74,271.97	1,620.00	\$ 51,377.99	69%
15	Fire Medic	\$ 58,207.47	2,866.41	\$ 48,599.84	83%
16	Battalion Chief	\$ 106,421.45	1,722.00	\$ 46,043.67	43%
17	Fire Fighter	\$ 62,709.75	2,753.59	\$ 45,450.55	72%
18	Captain	\$ 84,895.20	1,172.00	\$ 42,645.08	50%
19	Lieutenant	\$ 91,581.73	1,021.00	\$ 41,667.86	45%
20	Lieutenant	\$ 81,740.26	1,092.50	\$ 40,612.70	50%
21	Fire Fighter	\$ 58,417.88	2,002.25	\$ 40,003.17	68%
22	Fire Medic	\$ 58,207.47	1,851.50	\$ 38,952.69	67%
23	Lieutenant	\$ 69,438.22	1,292.00	\$ 38,579.09	56%
24	Fire Fighter	\$ 64,855.81	341.00	\$ 37,969.44	59%
25	Fire Fighter	\$ 48,549.95	2,567.66	\$ 37,371.71	77%
Calendar Year 2022					
Ranking	Position	Salary	Overtime Hours	Overtime Pay	Overtime to Salary
1	Fire Medic Technician	\$ 89,078.25	3,154.17	\$ 86,756.89	97%
2	Medic Captain	\$ 122,162.56	870.50	\$ 77,460.92	63%
3	Battalion Chief	\$ 127,978.41	1,938.00	\$ 76,601.32	60%
4	Fire Technician	\$ 95,321.74	2,214.50	\$ 67,579.16	71%
5	Fire Medic Lieutenant	\$ 96,735.23	1,954.50	\$ 60,616.25	63%
6	Fire Medic	\$ 87,902.88	2,058.00	\$ 57,883.13	66%
7	Fire Technician	\$ 82,517.26	2,158.20	\$ 56,677.08	69%
8	Fire Medic	\$ 71,456.74	2,485.50	\$ 56,175.98	79%
9	Lieutenant	\$ 92,735.14	1,872.00	\$ 54,898.21	59%
10	Fire Medic Lieutenant	\$ 88,361.15	1,859.50	\$ 54,402.76	62%
11	Captain	\$ 109,540.20	1,533.34	\$ 53,255.74	49%
12	Fire Medic Lieutenant	\$ 91,152.42	1,764.25	\$ 51,799.07	57%
13	Fire Medic	\$ 73,806.30	1,971.92	\$ 49,517.51	67%
14	Fire Fighter	\$ 78,053.41	2,028.50	\$ 49,275.93	63%
15	Captain	\$ 98,038.89	1,599.50	\$ 48,529.44	50%
16	Battalion Chief	\$ 120,128.11	1,262.25	\$ 48,407.70	40%
17	Captain	\$ 104,124.13	1,465.25	\$ 46,315.57	44%
18	Lieutenant	\$ 103,900.74	1,365.00	\$ 45,810.61	44%

19	Captain	\$ 107,166.51	1,217.75	\$ 44,665.45	42%
20	Fire Medic Technician	\$ 76,273.77	1,730.50	\$ 43,702.21	57%
21	Fire Fighter	\$ 73,354.44	1,865.75	\$ 43,510.30	59%
22	Fire Technician	\$ 85,078.16	1,565.00	\$ 42,414.64	50%
23	Battalion Chief	\$ 123,444.42	1,118.50	\$ 40,924.88	33%
24	Lieutenant	\$ 92,735.34	534.75	\$ 36,624.24	39%
25	Fire Medic	\$ 73,806.22	1,484.50	\$ 34,940.05	47%
Calendar Year 2023					
Ranking	Position	Salary	Overtime Hours	Overtime Pay	Overtime to Salary
1	Medic Captain	\$ 122,162.56	1,266.25	\$ 120,305.98	98%
2	Captain	\$ 111,795.42	1,300.75	\$ 103,408.31	92%
3	Battalion Chief	\$ 129,957.73	2,442.75	\$ 99,923.65	77%
4	Fire Medic Lieutenant	\$ 102,746.84	2,546.25	\$ 87,641.31	85%
5	Fire Medic	\$ 74,800.88	3,320.50	\$ 83,794.05	112%
6	Fire Medic Lieutenant	\$ 94,090.46	2,771.00	\$ 82,678.93	88%
7	Captain	\$ 114,969.50	2,190.00	\$ 80,447.84	70%
8	Fire Medic	\$ 89,108.95	2,667.00	\$ 76,209.49	86%
9	Fire Medic Technician	\$ 91,146.68	2,713.75	\$ 74,920.58	82%
10	Fire Technician	\$ 97,639.28	2,355.25	\$ 72,449.07	74%
11	Fire Medic Lieutenant	\$ 99,861.22	2,084.50	\$ 69,566.27	70%
12	Lieutenant	\$ 95,861.38	2,376.50	\$ 68,904.61	72%
13	Lieutenant	\$ 98,746.75	2,088.50	\$ 64,969.12	66%
14	Lieutenant	\$ 107,403.13	1,826.50	\$ 61,780.27	58%
15	Battalion Chief	\$ 126,466.33	1,367.00	\$ 57,329.30	45%
16	Lieutenant	\$ 98,746.75	828.50	\$ 56,797.86	58%
17	Fire Medic	\$ 79,570.23	2,374.20	\$ 55,865.44	70%
18	Fire Fighter	\$ 79,224.29	2,157.75	\$ 55,397.32	70%
19	Fire Fighter	\$ 81,608.97	2,142.25	\$ 55,353.57	68%
20	Captain	\$ 111,795.34	1,539.75	\$ 54,177.07	48%
21	Fire Medic Lieutenant	\$ 91,204.84	1,727.50	\$ 52,263.15	57%
22	Battalion Chief	\$ 129,957.73	1,415.00	\$ 52,150.57	40%
23	Fire Medic Lieutenant	\$ 88,319.50	1,284.75	\$ 51,449.78	58%
24	Captain	\$ 105,447.51	1,573.75	\$ 50,963.31	48%
25	Fire Technician	\$ 89,769.89	1,671.41	\$ 48,129.53	54%

Source: Unaudited DFRS Infor data

Summary of Work

Overall, while considering the improvement opportunities identified during the audit, DFRS appears to be effectively planning for, managing, and deploying personnel, apparatus, and equipment in order to provide exceptional fire and rescue service that can meet the expectations of the citizens of the County. DFRS employees, including management and personnel at stations, are passionate about their responsibilities and service, and strive to continue developing as the County grows through implementing safer practices and improved response.

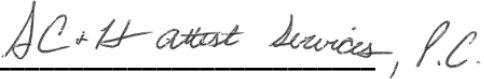
Based on the audit procedure performed, opportunities exist for DFRS to continue mitigating risks within staffing and overtime functions. These opportunities are represented by six improvement opportunities, which are outlined below.

Improvement Opportunities

1. Review of trainings, minimum staffing levels, and staffing of specialized and supervisory personnel within DFRS to assist in mitigating the need for overtime and potential for determining minimum staffing levels.
2. Enhanced policies and procedural documentation reflective of the current procedures performed within DFRS related to staffing and overtime processes.
3. Enhanced scheduling processes to ensure compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and compatible responsibilities.
4. Enhanced monitoring and enforcement of sick leave.
5. Enhanced functionality between the Infor WFM and Telestaff systems in order to eliminate redundant and manual tasks.

The following section provides detailed observations and recommendations to help mitigate associated risks.

We appreciate the assistance and cooperation of the management and staff of DFRS who assisted in the performance of this audit, as well as thank them for their service to the community. Please contact us if you have any questions or comments regarding any of the information contained in the performance audit report.


SC&H Attest Services, P.C.
Sparks, Maryland
May 21, 2025

III. Detailed Improvement Opportunities and Recommendations

Improvement Opportunity 1

Review of trainings, minimum staffing levels, and staffing of specialized and supervisory personnel within DFRS to assist in mitigating the need for overtime and potential for determining minimum staffing levels.

Detail

Through observation, inquiry, and analysis, SC&H conducted procedures to identify contributors to overtime within DFRS. Based on the results, SC&H identified two contributors to overtime being: 1) trainings, including recruit classes, and 2) supervisory/specialized personnel fill requirements.

DFRS conducts two types of trainings: ongoing trainings, where active employees participate in, or instruct, in order to remain compliant with County, Division, and any applicable qualification requirements or standards; and recruit trainings, where active employees instruct or assist in recruit class activities. Through these regular recruit classes, DFRS has amassed a large workforce of entry-level firefighters and paramedics. Additionally, supervisor or specialist positions (e.g., Hazmat, Technicians, Officers, SWIFT, Medic, etc.) require prerequisite experience in order to qualify for these roles. As a result, the ability to fill vacancies in these positions are more restrictive in their backfill requirements. This may result in potential challenges or multiple reassignments when filling vacancies to establish minimum requirements and effective teams. It is important to note that the accumulation of overtime may not solely result from an individual performing training or instruction but also takes into account possible overtime accrued by the employee acting as their backfill.

DFRS conducts all recruit trainings with in-house instructors. One major contributor to overtime is employees being pulled during their scheduled shifts or days off to either instruct or oversee recruit classes. If pulled in for training on their day off, the employee is compensated for overtime. Alternatively, if they are pulled away during their scheduled shift, another employee will be pulled in to cover their shift for the time they are away. This can result in overtime unless the replacement is in a detail/leave impact personnel role.

Per DFRS policy, an employee requested to fill a vacancy can still remain on-duty, up to five hours, even if the initial employee cancels their leave or returns to work when the employee replacing them has already begun the shift, resulting in the accumulation of overtime pay.

When a vacancy arises, DFRS policy allows higher positions to work down into a lower role in order to avoid mandatory holdovers. If performed, however, this would result in a more qualified employee working in a less qualified role at their higher standard or overtime pay rate.

New minimum staffing requirements per apparatus³¹, consistent with NFPA 1710, which increases minimum staffing on engines to four personnel, compared to the previous DFRS standard of three per engine, may result in further challenges on both employee and equipment resources. It is important to note that NFPA 1710 is a recommended standard and not a law or mandatory requirement. Further, with additional employees to respond, DFRS may need to increase the frequency of holdovers if current

³¹ The adoption of four personnel staffing on engines, consistent with NFPA 1710, began after the scope period and continues to be implemented across stations. As a result, no data on the impact of four person staffing was included or evaluated during the audit.

specialized staffing levels remain consistent. This impact may be mitigated, however, through proper allocation of detail personnel by DFRS management and the use of alternative minimum staffing utilization when needs occur.

Supporting Data

The following is a breakdown of overtime hours recorded within Infor by department during calendar years 2019, 2022 & 2023:

	2019	2022	2023	Grand Total
170-DFRS Professional				
Hours	7,302	2,307	3,077	12,685
Amount	\$ 180,719	\$ 76,713	\$ 101,035	\$ 358,467
175-DFRS Fire & EMS				
Hours	238,852	222,404	244,911	706,167
Amount	\$ 5,013,283	\$ 5,661,696	\$ 6,951,215	\$ 17,626,194
185-DFRS Fire Marshall				
Hours	1,675	1,401	1,510	4,585
Amount	\$ 46,404	\$ 54,049	\$ 68,143	\$ 168,596
Other				
Hours	712	568	637	1,917
Amount	\$ 17,052	\$ 21,256	\$ 23,679	\$ 61,987

Based on the Recruit Class (RC) start/end dates and instructor listing provided by DFRS, SC&H calculated the average overtime hours incurred by each instructor, total overtime incurred by the instructors, and total estimated compensation for the instructor overtime recorded in Infor during the period³². The results were organized by applicable recruit class and summarized below:

Recruit Class	Number of Recruits	Number of Instructors	Average Overtime Hours	Total Overtime Hours	Total Overtime Compensation
RC24	30	10	156.78	1,567.75	\$36,218.68
RC25	30	10	188.13	1,881.25	\$45,400.47
RC26	30	10	123.38	1,233.75	\$35,426.08
RC32	28	13	361.02	4,693.25	\$118,003.29
RC33/34	56	13	386.31	5,022.00	\$145,928.18
RC35	34	13	185.99	2,417.85	\$68,751.85

The following is a summary of training hours recorded within Telestaff during calendar years 2019, 2022 & 2023:

Summarized Telestaff Training Code(s)	2019 Total Hours	2022 Total Hours	2023 Total Hours
Detailed - Training Codes	4,683.00	3,559.75	4,650.00
Detailed - Instructor Codes	1,641.00	494.00	758.25
EWS - Training Codes	5,490.25	12,084.83	15,061.10
EWS - Instructor Codes	10,217.38	9,355.25	18,272.00
Total	22,031.63	25,493.83	38,741.35

³² During this period, DFRS did not collect detailed data to properly segregate and track specific activities attributed to the relevant accounts. As a result, some overtime spending may be a result of working overtime in field operations rather than solely training operations.

Risks

1. Specialized or supervisory positions could create challenges in filling vacancies, possibly resulting in overtime or holdovers, if they are not efficiently deployed or assigned. Mandatory and sudden holdovers may also negatively affect employee morale and possibly impact service and response.
2. Inefficient planning or scheduling of training activities could create challenges in filling vacancies, possibly resulting in otherwise unnecessary overtime or holdovers. Mandatory and sudden holdovers may also negatively affect employee morale and possibly impacting service and response.

Recommendation 1.1

Review current and anticipated requirements of the County regarding specialized positions (e.g., HAZMAT, SWIFT Water Rescue, Medic, etc.) against current leave impact capacity on a regular basis (e.g., monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually, etc.) in order to identify shortages prior to or as they take effect.

If shortages in specialized positions are anticipated or present, include specialization trainings/certifications, such as HAZMAT, SWIFT Water Rescue, and Medic, within recruit classes based on current and anticipated requirements of the County.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services agrees that regular review of the number and distribution of specialty positions across our shifts are critical to ensure proper staffing of our fire stations. When specialty positions statistics reveal a need to provide additional training opportunities, those training offerings will be made available.

Implementation Date

The review of distribution of specialty positions is an ongoing task. This task is reviewed by at a high level by the Assistant Chief of Emergency Services as a part of our regular employee transfer process (as frequently as every six weeks).

Annually in the fall, a comprehensive review of specialty distribution is completed which reviews all specialty positions and their distribution across our three shifts and major adjustments are made to level specialty positions occur.

Recommendation 1.2

DFRS is in the process of implementing NFPA 1710 and four person staffing on rescue apparatus on all call responses. This endeavor is costly in manpower and the need to increase detail staffing to cover vacancies that may arise for many reasons including but not limited to Kelly Days, all leave types, trainings etc. DFRS should consider minimum staffing on days and timeframes where staffing resources may be limited, possibly due to ongoing calls, leave, trainings, etc., order to limit the need for hold time or overtime in covering staffing shortages. DFRS should determine station locations where three-person staffing could be utilized during times of need in order to implement minimum staffing standards where, for example, call volume is lower on average with other County stations, or another County Career station is located close in proximity. This recommendation provides the ability to utilize minimum staffing at times of need.

Alternative staffing mixes and response options may also provide opportunities for cost savings in overtime or holdovers. For example, sending a team of four across two or more apparatus could result in minimum staffing on response, but additional equipment to utilize while on the scene. In this example, three

employees could be assigned to an engine, and one to a tanker. Upon arrival, the tanker is hooked up, providing a reliable water source, and the tanker driver adjusts to create an engine team of four. The use of a Medic as a fourth person on an engine may also be more beneficial to staff an ambulance, as this will also result in temporary down-staffing as they are moved to staff an ambulance when on-scene.

Minimum staffing and alternative staffing mix recommendations could provide flexibility for the service to uphold high response standards while also ensuring efficient governance over the staffing process, especially at times of need during recruitment classes, training and times where high leave impact affects the County.

Management Action Plan³³

Unfortunately, the recommendation proposed is not consistent with the National Fire Service Consensus Standard, NFPA1710 (Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments). The move to four person staffing is based on the Division's desire to meet national consensus standards as well as the recommendations found in the Ball Road After Action Report.

As four-person staffing for Fire Engines, Rescue Squads and Truck Companies has been implemented in Frederick County, a leave factor of 1.5 employees per approved staffing FTE has been applied. As an example, when phases 1 and 2 of four-person staffing was implemented in CY2023 and CY2024, 7 companies across three shifts were moved in each phase to four person staffing requiring 21 personnel. To achieve that staffing level Frederick County DFRS hired 32 personnel (21 to fill the staffing needed and 11 leave impact positions to address the vacancy concern listed in this recommendation). This move not only covered the leave impact needed by the increase in staffing from the SAFER grant, but it improved our overall leave impact percentage of the Division.

The Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services is slated to update our Fire and Rescue Service Delivery Plan in 2025/2026. This report addresses our future staffing needs and the plan for staffing distribution. That work will begin when the FY26 budget is approved and published and will be completed in the Spring of 2026.

Implementation Date

The Fire and Rescue Service Delivery plan will begin its next update cycle in June of 2025 and will be completed in the spring of 2026.

Recommendation 1.3

DFRS should consider ongoing reviews of resources for recruit or ongoing trainings, in order to reduce the demand on existing employees. For example, this may result in a review of assigned instructors where for revisions in order to be more efficient in assignment or implementing alternative actions such as hiring former and part-time employees to act as instructors or transitioning staff into permanent training roles in order to mitigate demand and impact of trainings on overtime. This could alleviate DFRS's over-budget spending on overtime attributed to trainings which, during fiscal years 2019 through 2024, averaged

³³ In response to the Management Action Plan, DFRS could utilize alternative staffing solutions in a manor to alleviate overtime or holds by allowing for 3 person staffing as scheduling needs warrant it rather than a permanent arrangement. This remains in accordance with the MOU, which allows for some stations to staff at 3 person staffing.

approximately \$73,500.00 each year and resulted in \$367,858.94 over-budget³⁴. Additionally, DFRS should consider the number detail positions during their review in order to prevent over-hiring and over-reliance during periods where recruit classes are and are not in session.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services frequently reviews the amount of instructional time required at the public safety training facility against the number of hours that a FTE position at the academy requires and requests those positions when the data indicates such (example: recent improvements to the staffing of EMS Training within the Training Office).

Additionally, DFRS has recently adjusted account strings to provide for the tracking of Overtime that is incurred as a result of both ongoing and recruit training. Documents such as Informational Bulletin 25-004 have been published to assist in guiding employees to appropriately charge their time within Infor WFM. We continue to work with staff to assure accuracy of the data within Infor WFM but a future plan to link Telestaff with Infor WFM within the next year will provide much more accurate data for DFRS to base their decisions on.

Implementation Date

Ongoing

Recommendation 1.4

DFRS should establish or review current utilization of a dedicated training coordinator whose sole responsibility is to plan, coordinate, and oversee trainings across DFRS to meet best practice standards for administrative roles that assist with budget, finance, and payroll functions.

Management Action Plan

This role currently exists with the Battalion Chief of Training within the Emergency Services Section. There are a lot of factors that are involved with the decision logic of the schedule and staffing of training events. The Battalion Chief of Training will continue to oversee this function and ensure that training provided is completed in accordance with policy, procedure, and standards and as fiscally efficient as possible.

Actions to monitor fiscal efficacy include:

- Monitoring training course interest to determine if multiple offerings on different shifts can better accommodate the student interest volume.
- Monitoring instructor usage hours to determine when it is appropriate to request additional assigned training staff vs detailing instructors in from field operations.
- Breaking down and tracking training expenses in a more granular level specific to activities (examples: BLS or ALS recert, Haz-Mat, Technical Rescue, MOTO, Water Rescue, Recruit Trainings).

Implementation Date

Ongoing

³⁴ During this period, DFRS did not collect detailed data to properly segregate and track specific activities attributed to the relevant accounts. As a result, some overtime spending may be a result of training personnel working overtime in field operations rather than training operations.

Recommendation 1.5

On a weekly or regular basis, review utilization of staff working down to fill vacancies in order to determine if the selection was efficient and justified.

Management Action Plan

By the hiring rules in Telestaff as established in the Memorandum of Understanding with L3666, personnel only “work down” to avoid employee holdovers. DFRS will continue to regularly review when employees “work down” to ensure that Telestaff is following the hiring rules within Telestaff and our Memorandum of Understanding with L3666.

Implementation Date

The monitoring and review of the use of employees “working down” to avoid employee holdover is an ongoing task that will be completed by the Scheduling Captain whenever an occurrence of a person is assigned to work down happens.

Recommendation 1.6

Refer to Recommendation 3.1.

Management Action Plan

Refer to Management Action Plan for Recommendation 3.1.

Implementation Date

Refer to Management Action Plan for Recommendation 3.1.

Improvement Opportunity 2

Enhanced policies and procedural documentation reflective of the current procedures performed within DFRS related to staffing and overtime processes.

Detail

DFRS policies and procedures do not align with current practices, requiring review and correction. Specifically, we identified:

1. Policy 2.01.07 (Eff. Date 10/1/2023, Rev. 10/1/2020) describes a function within the Telestaff system to allow patterns of sick leave use to be easily identified. However, upon inquiry, no such function exists or is available to DFRS management. Currently, DFRS management monitors sick leave through the use of reporting and data retrieved from the Telestaff system to identify and address instances where employees have unverified leave for more than 4 consecutive occurrences per the policy or patterns of abuse. This system, however, is not systemic and not specific in policy on how to look at issues.

Risks

1. Insufficient and out of date policy and procedural documentation may result in inconsistent performance of work by Division employees.
2. Conflicting policy and procedural documentation may result in inconsistent performance of work across the Division.

Recommendation 2.1

DFRS should continue to monitor policies and procedures and update on a regular basis. At a minimum, policies should be reviewed and updated annually based on current practices. Policies should include job specific details related to the various sub-process areas.

Evidence of review of the policies should be documented, and any substantial changes should be immediately communicated and distributed to impacted staff.

Policies should be made readily available for DFRS employees to access and review.

Trainings on revised policies and procedures may be necessary and conducted for all employees and stations.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services concurs with the importance of this recommendation. We have a Policy Review Committee that review our Fire and Rescue Policies to ensure that they are both current and free from policy conflict. As our processes change, or rules need to be amended, policies are updated and communicated to our field staff via email and posted on our Division's SharePoint site.

The related policies and procedures that are affected by the new Memorandum of Understanding with L3666 will be reviewed and updated prior to the MOU going into effect on July 1, 2025.

Policy 2.01.07 (Use of Sick Leave) Section IV, K states "Telestaff provides tools that will identify patterns of sick leave usage. The system can easily identify patterns when a member has a history of using sick leave on weekends, holidays, specific days of the week, etc." Those specific statements are not accurate as written as Telestaff does not provide specific tools. There is a calendar that provides an ability for management to

observe trends and reports that can provide lists of leave usage dates and times, but the software itself does not possess the automated intelligence to identify patterns itself. This policy will be updated to reflect a more accurate description of the true capabilities of Telestaff.

With a very dynamic environment in scheduling numerous employees, there will be rare occurrences when a specific practice may not match policy. When this occurs, the Scheduling Captain will interface with the Emergency Service Section leadership to ensure that our policies are current or if a policy change is needed.

Implementation Date

The Scheduling Captain, in coordination with the leadership of the Emergency Services Section will conduct an annual review of scheduling policies and procedures timed at the start of each fiscal year which would be the time that any new labor agreement is implemented.

Improvement Opportunity 3

Enhanced scheduling processes to ensure compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and compatible responsibilities.

Detail

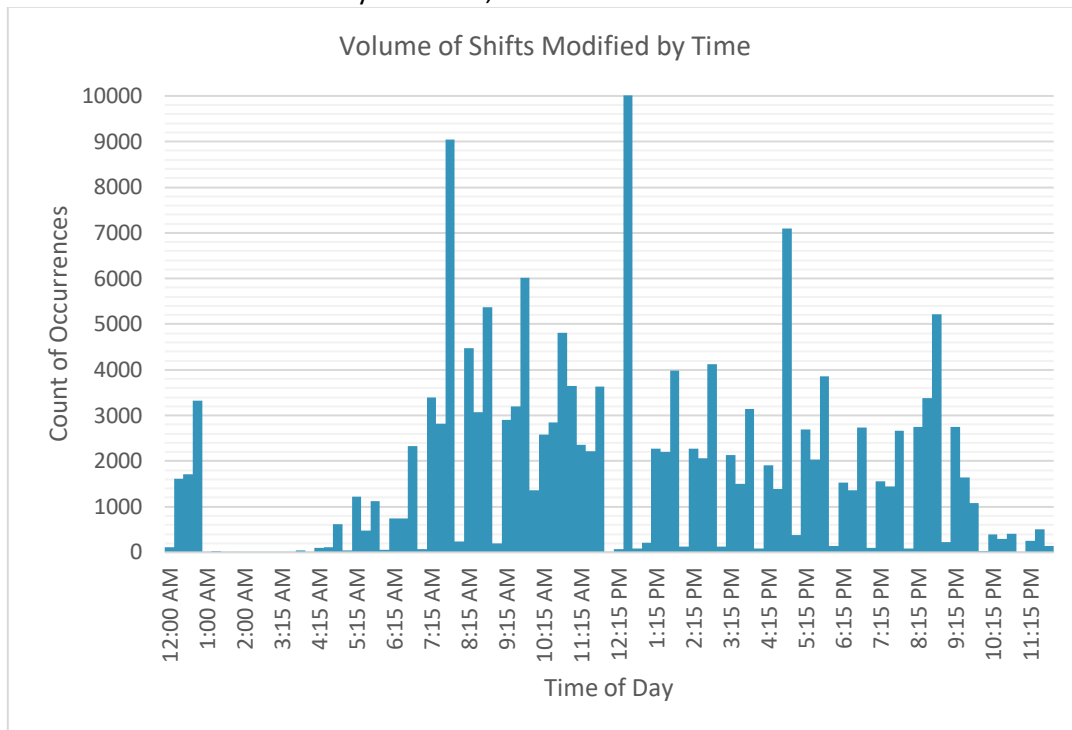
The DFRS Scheduling Captain has additional responsibilities in addition to their role as scheduler for the whole Division. The Scheduling Captain works an 8 hour shift Monday through Friday. For instance, where the Scheduling Captain is pulled away from their duties, or once their shift ends, Battalion Chiefs are responsible for scheduling until they return. This results in conflicting or discrepant scheduling practices between the Scheduling Captain and Battalion Chiefs, which can also be in conflict with the rules established in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Examples could include prioritizing certain employees based on preference rather than criteria-based priority.

Based on the data provided by DFRS, scheduling is an ongoing task throughout the day. While a majority of shifts are assigned (i.e., modified) within the Telestaff system during daytime hours, the need for scheduling review and oversight goes beyond a specific timeframe.

Current DFRS processes related to staffing of vacancies through the use of overtime do not include any approval or subsequent review/reconciliation procedures to ensure compliance with policies, procedures, or the MOU. As a result, instances of non-compliance may have occurred that are not detected.

Supporting Data

The following is a graph depicting the volume of shift modifications/changes performed by time of day based on data from calendar years 2019, 2022 & 2023:



The following is a graph depicting the total count of shift modifications/changes performed by time of day based on data from calendar years 2019, 2022 & 2023:

Modified Timeframe	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
12:00AM – 4:00AM	321	1,629	1,509	1,264	953	917	335
4:00AM – 8:00AM	1,026	9,646	2,586	3,477	2,546	2,028	1,583
8:00AM – 12:00PM	1,634	13,650	10,382	8,857	8,250	4,822	1,314
12:00PM – 4:00PM	10,754	15,461	18,610	18,026	18,869	17,545	14,534
4:00PM – 8:00PM	3,856	4,156	3,727	2,746	4,724	1,963	9,770
8:00PM – 12:00AM	10,069	1,162	1,722	1,765	1,233	923	2,271
Total	27,652	45,704.00	38,536.00	36,135.00	36,575.00	28,198.00	29,807.00

Risks

1. A lack of a trained 24/7 scheduler or team may cause inefficiencies in the transfer of responsibilities and result in conflicting or discrepant scheduling practices between the Scheduling Captain and Battalion Chiefs.
2. A lack of a trained 24/7 scheduler or team may result in instances where the shared responsibilities result in a direct conflict with the rules established in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Recommendation 3.1

DFRS should consider formally organizing staff to implement 24/7 scheduling duties which are trained regularly and are dedicated to assist in managing scheduling within Telestaff/Infor on a 24-hour, 7 days a week basis to meet best practice standards for administrative roles that assist with budget, finance, and payroll functions. This implementation could include cross duties as a Battalion Chief or other administrative duty professionals. If DFRS chooses to maintain scheduling responsibilities with the Battalion Chiefs, DFRS should continue implementing bi-annual training and on-going review processes to ensure compliance with policies and MOU requirements.

DFRS should ensure appropriate access and segregation of duties exists in the scheduling process. Formalized (documented) and regular (weekly) review procedures should also be implemented in the process.

DFRS should ensure individuals responsible for monitoring access have the appropriate training and knowledge to understand the risks and controls associated with the scheduling process. This monitoring should occur from dedicated/trained schedulers on a daily basis with the formalized weekly reviews by supervisor levels also occurring.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services has requested positions to provide for the creation of a 24/7 scheduling function with appropriate oversight in both the FY2025 and FY2026 budget processes. Until those positions are funded, we have a Captain who handles scheduling duties during the business day. Afterhours scheduling is then handled by Battalion Chief 901 (Fire Station 33). The scheduling Captain currently provides scheduling oversight for consistency. Additionally, the Scheduling Captain provides as needed training on scheduling practices that involve the backfilling of vacancies. This is accomplished through in person, video snippets and written documentation provided to the Battalion Chiefs who fill the capacity of afterhours schedulers. As was noted in recommendation 2.1, DFRS regularly reviews these reference documents for accuracy and updates them as needed.

Telestaff itself provides access control of scheduling responsibilities through limitation of authority levels based on rank and position within the organization. Through assigned authority levels, the ability to perform the scheduling function is limited to those with that specific permission. Additionally logging within

the software allows system administrator to audit who performed specific scheduling tasks and when those tasks were completed. Access control and authority levels are reviewed upon any employees transfer or promotion.

Implementation Date

The implementation of dedicated around-the-clock schedulers is based on funding of the positions which make FY2027 the soonest that recommendation could be implemented. The other related recommendations to access control, training and monitoring have been implemented but those processes are ongoing.

Recommendation 3.2

DFRS should consider establishing formal policies and procedures to address instances where the dedicated scheduler cannot perform their responsibilities. this should include but is not limited to:

1. Positions responsible for performing scheduling activities until they return.
 - a. These positions should be well trained personnel setup as a proxy user/editor to the system.
2. Expectations for temporary schedulers.
3. Consistent steps in the scheduling process.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services feels that this documentation currently exists. DFRS will update policy 2.01.13 to define scheduling responsibilities/schedulers. When the daytime scheduling officer is off duty, Battalion Chief 901 assumes scheduling duties. The step by step process for scheduling is covered in Division Policy, Telestaff Rules and the Memorandum of Understanding with L3666. Additionally, reference pages are available to ensure consistency in the interpretation of the documents, those reference documents are located on the Battalion Chief's "notebook" on the Division's SharePoint Site accessible to all Battalion Chiefs who are eligible to fill the afterhours scheduling role.

As noted in the Management Action Plan to Recommendation 3.1, training is provided to those performing after hours scheduling on an as needed basis.

At the end of each business day the Scheduling Captain sends a communication (e-mail) to all Battalion Chiefs to denote if any additional staffing exists, if there are any vacancies, holdovers, actors, or anyone working down. This communication also shares any other scheduling related issues exist before the next business day.

The performance of afterhours scheduling is monitored by the Scheduling Captain, any issues identified are communicated to the afterhours schedulers and if a global issue is identified just in time training is created or policies are communicated to ensure that consistency is maintained.

Implementation Date

Completed

Recommendation 3.3

DFRS should consider conducting annual or bi-annual trainings for positions whose responsibilities may include scheduling activities in order to establish consistency and understanding of staffing and scheduling activities throughout DFRS.

Management Action Plan

The Emergency Services Section of the Division of Fire and Rescue Services meets quarterly. These meetings are attended by those who report to the Deputy Chief of Emergency Services as well as the Battalion Chiefs in Field Operations. A portion of these meetings are dedicated to scheduling. Additionally, the Captain of Scheduling provides direct one on one training to new Battalion Chiefs and maintains reference guide documents on the Battalion Chief's Notebook portion of the DFRS SharePoint site.

Implementation Date

These actions are already in place and will be an ongoing effort into the future.

Recommendation 3.4

DFRS, with the assistance of any specialists, should consider reviewing Telestaff functionality and current utilization in order to determine:

1. If established rules and criteria within Telestaff are consistent and compliant with the requirements present within the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
2. If additional functionality exists in Telestaff to further streamline the staff picking process throughout scheduling.

Management Action Plan

An outside contractor recommended by UKG (Telestaff) was hired in the summer of 2024 to update hiring rules and ensure that Telestaff is functioning optimally based on our hiring rules and the Memorandum of Understanding with the L3666.

For the upcoming Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the L3666, there were no changes made to the hiring rules utilized to fill vacancies. The Scheduling Captain will continue to monitor for future capability changes within Telestaff that DFRS can utilize. The next change to the MOU is not scheduled until FY2029.

Implementation Date

While this task has been completed for the upcoming fiscal year, it is a task that will need to be completed on an annual basis to ensure that any functionality improvements of the software are capitalized on.

Improvement Opportunity 4

Enhanced monitoring and enforcement of sick leave.

Detail

Based on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), sick leave is compensated as hours worked. This may result in schemes where an employee requests overtime, calls out sick for their regularly scheduled shift, and gets compensated for overtime hours worked, without actually working the hours. This may also create a strain on resources and personnel, who could either be an employee down or attempting to fill a vacancy.

For example, an employee scheduled to work Monday and Thursday may sign-up to work overtime on Tuesday and Friday within the Telestaff system. If selected by the Scheduling Captain to fill a vacancy through overtime, the employee can call out sick on their scheduled shifts but perform their overtime shifts. The shifts where the employee called out sick would be considered hours worked, compensated, and included in the calculation of hours worked to achieve overtime. This would result in the employee only working two shifts, but being compensated for working Monday and Thursday, as well as Tuesday and Friday at the overtime rate of time and a half.

Additionally, DFRS Policy 2.01.07 (Eff. Date 10/1/2023) requires employees to obtain a doctor's note upon taking sick time off and limit 'unverified,' or unexcused, sick leave to four occurrences per employee before disciplinary action is taken. Occurrences are consecutive, meaning multiple days may be classified as a single occurrence. During testing, approximately a third of total sick hours accrued during calendar years 2019, 2022, & 2023 were classified as 'unverified.' A total of 42 employees over calendar years 2019 (6), 2022 (12), and 2023 (24), a 100% increase year-over-year, had 'unverified' leave for more than 4 days recorded within the Telestaff system, which may have resulted in potential non-compliance with DFRS policy and required disciplinary action to be taken. Due to limitations in the data received, SC&H was unable to determine the exact number of occurrences that resulted.

Per inquiry with DFRS, it was noted that there were a total of 13 employees who had more than four sick unverified leave occurrences during calendar years 2019 (2), 2022 (3), 2023 (8). Prior to 2023, no disciplinary actions were taken to address instances of unverified sick leave. However, beginning in 2023, DFRS began taking disciplinary actions that included, but were not limited to, verbal and written reprimands or suspension.

Supporting Data

The following is a breakdown of FMLA, verified sick, and unverified sick leave hours recorded within Telestaff during calendar years 2019, 2022 & 2023:

2019			
Code	Description	Sum of Hours	Percent of Hours
REG	Leave - FMLA SICK (FMLA-SICK)	11,619	27.9%
	Leave - Sick Unverified (SUN)	11,419	27.4%
	Leave - Sick Verified (SVN)	18,654	44.7%
Grand Total		41,692	100%

2022			
Code	Description	Sum of Hours	Percent of Hours
REG	Leave - FMLA SICK (FMLA-SICK)	17,014	32.5%
	Leave - Sick Unverified (SUN)	17,832	34.1%
	Leave - Sick Verified (SVN)	17,493	33.4%
Grand Total		52,338	100%

2023			
Code	Description	Sum of Hours	Percent of Hours
REG	Leave - FMLA SICK (FMLA-SICK)	21,887	35.7%
	Leave - Sick Unverified (SUN)	18,781	30.6%
	Leave - Sick Verified (SVN)	20,642	33.6%
SICK	Leave - SICK (SICK)	68	0.1%
Grand Total		61,378	100%

The following table quantifies the number of employees based on the number of days unverified sick leave was recorded within Telestaff during calendar years 2019, 2022 & 2023:

Days Unverified	Count of Employees (CY 2019)	Count of Employees (CY 2022)	Count of Employees (CY 2023)
1 Day	100	126	130
2 Days	77	98	107
3 Days	39	71	71
4 Days	28	54	45
5 Days	3	10	16
6 Days	-	1	4
7 Days	1	-	2
8 Days	1	1	-
9 Days	-	-	1
10 Days	-	-	1
19 Days	1	-	-

Based on the data above, there were 42 employees with more than four unverified days. SC&H selected those employees to test for occurrences versus days. Per DFRS a sick occurrence per policy is sick utilized within their shift consistently in dates. If an employee was sick on their shift for 24 hours and sick again for 24 hours on their next shift day, two days later, that counts as one occurrence versus two days. As a result, the following table quantifies those 42 employees based on the number of unverified sick leave occurrences during calendar years 2019, 2022 & 2023:

Unverified Occurrences	Count of Employees (CY 2019)	Count of Employees (CY 2022)	Count of Employees (CY 2023)
1 Occurrence	-	-	-
2 Occurrences	1	-	-
3 Occurrences	-	5	4
4 Occurrences	3	3	12
5 Occurrences	-	4	5
6 Occurrences	2	-	-
7 Occurrences	-	-	2
8 Occurrences	-	-	1

Risks

1. A lack of monitoring or enforcement of policies and procedures may result in unnecessary culmination of sick or overtime compensation an employee should not be eligible for.
2. Excessive or sudden leave could create challenges in filling vacancies, possibly resulting in otherwise unnecessary overtime or holdovers. Mandatory and sudden holdovers may also negatively affect employee morale and possibly impact service and response.

Recommendation 4.1

DFRS should consider reconciling Telestaff to Infor WFM on a periodic basis unless they are fully integrated and effectively communicate and merge account strings. Significant discrepancies, including unverified sick leave over what DFRS defines as allowable, should be evaluated and resolved in a timely manner as a result from the 2025 Infor system upgrade.

Management Action Plan

The integration of Telestaff and Infor are currently in its early stages and expected to be implemented within the next 12 to 18 months. DFRS will work with Finance and IIT staff on the link and reconciliation of the systems. Validation of the reconciliation will take place once the systems are in place and working as planned.

The scheduling office has automated a SUN (Sick Unverified), CNE (Canceled Not Excused) Report that runs every Monday morning at 0500hrs for the entire calendar year and is distributed via email to all Emergency Services Section Chief Officers as well as the Manager of Personnel and Communications. This automated report should address SUN visibility and allow the issues to be addressed and resolved in a more timely manner. Upon receipt, Battalion Chiefs will review the report and touch base with station supervisors (Captain/Lieutenant) of employees who have 4 SUV occurrences for the year and ensure that the four existing SUV are coded correctly and make sure the employee knows that they are required to bring a sick note for their next and subsequent use of sick leave in the calendar year. If any employee has five or more occurrences of SUV, The Battalion Chief will again engage the station supervisor to ensure accuracy, if verified, the Battalion Chief will work with the Manager of Administration and Communication to take the appropriate disciplinary action.

While a complete Telestaff/WFM reconciliation seems reasonable it is important to share that certain items like rulings from the Workers Compensation Commission can be released months or years after a Telestaff entry modifying entries in both WFM and Telestaff. That makes even periodic reviews and the amount of data to be validated very challenging. Other challenges exist in that we are able to get more granular with Telestaff codes than the coding that INFOR uses. SV (sick verified) and SUV (sick unverified) are both coded as sick leave in Infor. Currently leave balances are reconciled between the two systems annually just prior to the leave pick process. When the two systems are linked, we expect those leave balances to communicate and be synchronized/reconciled in real time.

Implementation Date

Automated Sick Unverified reporting has been completed.

Recommendation 4.2

DFRS should determine what management's needs are and create automatic reports that can be run at established frequencies to allow for more effective oversight of staffing and overtime. Additionally, DFRS should work with the recently added Data Analyst position and County IT to create or evaluate additional reporting capabilities that can utilize or merge data from Infor, Telestaff, and any other applicable systems. Examples include:

1. Regular hours/compensation by employee, station, battalion, position (Point-in-time and accrued)
2. Overtime hours/compensation by employee, station, battalion, position (Point-in-time and accrued)
3. Verified and unverified sick Leave hours/compensation by employee, station, battalion, position (Point-in-time and accrued)

4. Other Leave Hours/Compensation by employee, station, battalion, position (Point-in-time and accrued)
5. Training Hours/Compensation by employee, station, battalion, position (Point-in-time and accrued)

Additionally, on an annual basis, DFRS should train staff on verified and unverified sick leave review procedures and establish expectations of notifications, whether done through email or other formats, for uniformed employee results and ramifications for those over on their unverified time.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services agrees with this recommendation. Since the start of this report, the Division has vastly improved its monitoring and action on sick leave usage. The Scheduling Officer will work with the Division's Data Analyst to continue to improve automation of reports. Several items discussed in the Management Action Plan earlier in this report to include training. recently established SUN and CNE reports discussed in Recommendation 4.1 and supervisory oversight are examples of both our progress and our commitment to improvement in the future.

Implementation Date

Ongoing

Recommendation 4.3

DFRS should consider implementing a policy to review sick leave periodically (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.) to obtain a better understanding of leave patterns and possible abuse.

Disciplinary action plans to address patterns of employees utilizing leave to maximize overtime should be established and included within the policy.

Policies should be made readily available for DFRS employees to access and review.

Trainings on revised policies and procedures may be necessary and conducted for all employees and stations. Notably, supervisory staff must be trained in methods to identify and address multiple unverified sick leave occurrences in order to remain consistent in DFRS's treatment and disciplinary actions.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services acknowledges the need for consistency in application of sick leave monitoring and has started a new process of monitoring sick leave usage on a weekly basis through an automated report distributed to the Battalion Chiefs. Policies on sick leave usage have been established. The topic of sick leave monitoring will be covered at the next quarterly Emergency Services Section meeting that will include training on scheduling topics all with the goal of improving consistency in action and compliance with existing policies.

Implementation Date

While the policy on sick leave usage and the monitoring of sick leave has started, this process will be ongoing.

Improvement Opportunity 5

Enhanced functionality between the Infor WFM and Telestaff systems in order to eliminate redundant and manual tasks.

Detail

DFRS uses two primary systems to manage departmental scheduling and overtime use: Infor WFM (Infor) and Telestaff. Infor and Telestaff do not utilize any shared workflow, resulting in duplicative and manual entries. For instance:

1. Employees must record and request all time and leave within each system independently of each other.
2. Employees must perform duplicative requests for time off within both systems, which has resulted in some challenges regarding the accrual and calculation of available time off across both. Specifically, employees interviewed stated that requests for leave in one system may be automatically rejected based on their accrued leave balance after being approved in another system.

Additionally, the conflicting overlap between DFRS's three-week FLSA cycle and the County's two-week payroll cycle results in unique or discrepant variances within the Infor system. For example, time and overtime pay may be overstated in a payroll period, but consistent with the FLSA period, due to the calculation and determination of total hours worked. This, however, is intentional and took great effort from the County to perform in order to properly calculate hours worked and overtime incurred for proper compensation. Differences in timekeeping categorizations between time entry systems also results in discrepant or unreliable tracking of time, attendance, or assignment information between systems at a glance.

Since Infor and Telestaff are not integrated, an increased risk that inaccuracy may be introduced into the payroll process exists. Timekeeping exceptions generally are the result of undetected or inaccurate data entry in Telestaff and inadequate review by supervisors. Reporting tools may also result in challenges when utilized to verify issues within the staffing selections and compliance with policies and procedures.

Per discussion with DFRS management on 11/14/2024, DFRS and County Finance are currently working together on a phase 4 implementation of the Infor system which would address the challenges detailed above. The implementation is currently scheduled to begin in February 2025 at the earliest.

Additionally, the ability to monitor and analyze certain hours using different criteria is limited and requires manual effort to perform. Because of this, DFRS management's ability to create detailed and specific metrics out of the data they accumulate may be too challenging or time consuming for the benefit it would provide.

For example: To compare a specific specialty's hours for a date range to the total hours for a station, the following would need to be performed:

1. A data table (1) from an internally maintained spreadsheet that includes employee staffing information/data would need to be created.
2. Employee staffing information data (2) from Telestaff would need to be extracted.
3. The user would need to determine a method to combine/reconcile results from (1) and (2), as there are not currently unique identifiers and there are opportunities to analyze employees with common names.
4. A data table/report with results from (1) and (2) would need to be created.

Risks

1. A lack of communication or optimization between two duplicative systems may result in redundant or manual entries that are at risk of manual errors, creating discrepancies across systems.
2. A lack of access to adequate data and reporting may limit the Division's ability to make strategic decisions or address discrepancies based on data trends or to adequately aggregate and track employee time. This in turn may prevent management from identifying areas of inefficiency within processes.

Recommendation 5.1

DFRS should consider reconciling Infor and Telestaff codes to allow for better reporting and reconciliation of standard and overtime costs between both Telestaff and Infor.

A code matrix should be developed to document any misaligned codes across both systems.

Management Action Plan

See response to recommendation 4.1

Implementation Date

See response to recommendation 4.1

Recommendation 5.2

DFRS, with the assistance of FCG IIT, should review remote access and application capabilities for the Infor system to determine if access is properly administered and address employee challenges.

DFRS should perform periodic reviews of system access for employees accessing timekeeping applications remotely to ensure access is appropriate based on employees' current responsibilities (e.g., access to employee timesheets as supervisor). Access reviews should be formally documented and reviewed by a Deputy Chief or Fire Chief periodically to ensure risks are managed appropriately.³⁵

Management Action Plan

This process is automated through INFOR with the system relating assigned position numbers to the supervisor position number. Supervisory access reviews are conducted whenever a new employee is promoted or transferred.

Implementation Date

Ongoing

Recommendation 5.3

DFRS should consider Implementing further unique identifiers, such as employee number, in all of its data and tracking tools to quickly and easily identify their employees, positions, jobs and stations.

³⁵ As of March 7th, the County has completed an upgrade to their timekeeping system Infor. This upgrade is cloud-based, and employees will be able to access and log in from external computers (e.g., a home computer or personal device). This upgrade provides staff with the ability to approve their timesheets remotely and timely, as well as allow supervisors the ability to finalize timesheets when not on duty.

These identifiers will assist DFRS in creating meaningful analytic tools which have the ability to predict leave trends, sick trends, and overtime.

Management Action Plan

Employee ID Number is already imbedded into the Telestaff and WFM (Infor) systems.

Implementation Date

No action required

Recommendation 5.4

With the assistance of County IT, DFRS should consider reviewing Infor and Telestaff compatibility on an annual basis to identify opportunities to integrate time entry systems to further correlate scheduled time to time worked.

This can help DFRS identify key contributors to overtime and give employees a central place where they can see their time and benefits.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services is actively engaged with both Finance, IIT and UKG to integrate Telestaff and INFOR to the fullest extent possible.

Implementation Date

Complete integration of the two systems with two-way communication is expected to occur in the 2nd quarter of 2026.

Recommendation 5.5

Refer to Recommendation 3.4.

Management Action Plan

See response to Recommendation 3.4

Implementation Date

See response to Recommendation 3.4

Recommendation 5.6

Refer to Recommendation 4.1.

Management Action Plan

See response to Recommendation 4.1

Implementation Date

See response to Recommendation 4.1

Recommendation 5.7

Refer to Recommendation 4.2.

Management Action Plan

See response to Recommendation 4.2

Implementation Date

See response to Recommendation 4.2

Appendix A

While conducting audit procedures, volume, assignments, and use of both County-owned and volunteer-owned apparatus were understood and reviewed. As a result, an improvement opportunity regarding enhanced communications on apparatus acquisitions between DFRS and volunteers was identified and is presented below. As this does not directly impact the audit scope of staffing and overtime, this additional improvement opportunity is included as an attachment to the report.

Additional Improvement Opportunity

Enhanced communication between volunteer and DFRS personnel related to acquisitions.

Detail

DFRS, through a Frederick County Fire/Rescue Planning Workgroup, is involved in the decision-making process for apparatus purchases by volunteers, as established in Policy 03.02.03 (Eff. Date 10/1/2023, Rev. 7/1/2021). Currently, DFRS utilizes some volunteer-owned apparatus and staffs only for what is necessary. However, excessive, inefficient, or redundant spending on apparatus may remain based on station observations and understandings performed. It is known, for instance, that the County has an abundance of Rescue Units³⁶. While looking at apparatus staffed and discussions on-site, it appears a number of apparatus owned by volunteer corporations are not regularly staffed and fairly idle.

Frederick County insures all apparatus and equipment purchased by the volunteer firefighter organizations which operate in the County. However, there is limited oversight by County representatives external to DFRS into what the volunteers are buying, which could create unnecessary financial strain on the county's financial resources. The county's fleet services division is also responsible for maintaining some of the volunteer's apparatus as well, although the volunteers can choose to use their own means to repair their apparatus.

Based on the analysis, DFRS had an average response time of approximately 7 minutes 24 seconds. DFRS also has a larger geographical area to cover. Call volume data and analysis did not suggest any issues are present in regards to response times and trends.

Article IV, Section 1-2-66 (C) of the Code of Frederick County, Maryland states: "Each authorized Fire, Rescue or Ambulance company must meet the following minimum response criteria:

1. Urban Fire, Rescue or Ambulance companies must respond within four (4) minutes from the time of first dispatch for an emergency incident for at least 99% of the dispatches received during each calendar month.
2. Suburban Fire, Rescue or Ambulance companies must respond within six (6) minutes from the time of first dispatch for an emergency incident for at least 90% of the dispatches received during each calendar month.
3. Rural Fire, Rescue and Ambulance companies must respond within eight (8) minutes from the time of first dispatch for an emergency incident for at least 80% of the dispatches received during each calendar month.

Risks

1. A lack of involvement or oversight in volunteer activities may result in redundant, inefficient, or excessive spending that the County is responsible to pay, insure, or maintain.

Recommendation A.1

In cooperation with volunteer companies/corporations, DFRS should conduct a review of all volunteer apparatus in the County to determine what is necessary and begin to expire apparatus the volunteer company/corporation and County do not utilize on a regular basis, or have a required need for based on station location, call volume, and use of County apparatus already insured and maintained by the County directly. If corporations choose to keep the apparatus, they would need to cover all maintenance and insurance or include those costs to the volunteer matrix calculation. This review should be conducted on an on-going or regular basis in order to prevent unnecessary equipment being held, insured, and maintained.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services feel that this recommendation is outside the scope of this Internal Audit Report. This topic is covered in the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Service Delivery Plan, which is slated to be updated beginning July 1, 2025 with the update to be completed in the Spring of 2026.

Additionally in accordance with policy 3.02.03 (Purchase of New or Replacement Apparatus) all apparatus purchased moving forward is reviewed by the Planning and Research Committee with a recommendation to approve or deny forwarded to the Fire Chief for final action with the volunteer corporation requesting to make the purchase.

Implementation Date

The Fire and Rescue Service Delivery Plan will be updated in the Spring of 2026.

Recommendation A.2

DFRS should consider establishing a formal process, in cooperation with County Fleet Services, to conduct annual check-ups, or require certified inspections by a third party annually to prove volunteer-owned equipment is up to code.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services feel that this recommendation is outside the scope of this Internal Audit Report and was covered in a 2020 report titled: FCG SP19B Frederick County Government DFRS Fleet Cost Comparison Special Project. Currently, all apparatus is required to receive a DOT inspection from either Frederick County Fleet Management or a facility authorized to complete DOT inspection.

Implementation Date

Completed

Recommendation A.3

In cooperation with volunteer companies/corporations and the County Risk Manager, DFRS should consider including insurance costs to the matrix for equipment that DFRS career employees do not regularly staff.

Management Action Plan

The Division of Fire and Rescue Services feel that this recommendation is outside the scope of this Internal Audit Report. This recommendation is not in alignment with current discussions on the future funding of Fire and Rescue insurance costs.

Implementation Date

No action required