2008 Fire Service Leadership Conference – Arizona Fire Chiefs Association
July 30th, 2008

The seminar was titled "Organizational Impact of the 48/96 Shift Schedule" – The speakers were:

Chief Douglas McBee, West Metro Fire District
Chief Mike Iacona, Flagstaff Fire Department
Chief Paul Wilson, Sun Lakes Fire Department
Division Commander Tige Watson, Albuquerque Fire Department
Chief Paul Adams, Avondale Fire Department

The format for the seminar was basically the 4 person panel who each described their departments organizational impacts of the 48/96 schedule. Then it was opened up for questions from the audience. The seminar lasted about 2 hours, then about 30 minutes of follow-up questions.

Avondale Fire –

- Had 51% vote when they went to trial
- 90% acceptance vote after trial period
- Overall very positive experience
- Noticed more of the "back to basics" firehouse behavior. Examples were eating more meals together, more camaraderie, more "crew time"
- Noticed less of the "nit picking" issues around the kitchen table – basically a more comfortable work environment. Positive increase in moral.
- Better training experience (per Training Division) because of having the ability to have a day off in between major trainings (live burns). Training Division thought they were able to provide a better training because of the day break in between trainings.
- Huge success with the City, because of them able to sell the "Go Green" concept
- Since implementation, the entire City of Avondale has helped out the Going Green concept, by working 4- 10's. The entire City offices are closed on Fridays

Albuquerque Fire Department -

- Using the 48/96 the longest. Been in place for last 14 years.
- 682 personnel – 23 stations
- Required 50% to go to trial
- Received 90% acceptance after trial
- Worked a 12/24/10 schedule prior to going to 48/96.
- Most of the medics were shift trading to make the 48/96's before it was adopted.
- Improved sick leave (mainly because of odd schedule prior, a lot of "sick days" were used on the 3rd 10 hour shift)
- Biggest benefit: – "Improved moral"
- Biggest challenge: - Training – hard time coordinating in the beginning.

Middlepark (California) Fire Department –

- Went to the schedule in January '03
- Administration was initially concerned about productivity. "Were guys just going to lie around and do nothing on the 2nd day?"
- Administration required a measurable 4 part work schedule each tour from the line personnel including:
    - District training
    - Company training
    - District activities. I.e. Inspections, pub ed, etc.
    - Station activities
- First 6 months, sick leave increased 21%, mainly because of the Saturday/Sunday rotations on the 48/96 schedule
- Dropped to an overall 12% increase in 2nd year.
- 3rd year on, basically back to the even point.
- Used measurable benchmarks for comparison reasons.
- Productivity increased 1st year
- By the 3rd year productivity was back to even point.
- "The numbers on sick leave and productivity had some dramatic changes in the first couple of years, but by the 3rd year, everything was back to midline"

<u>West Metro Fire –</u>

- Initially looked at the Denver schedule (Kelly day), but that would have required to hire another 1/3 firefighters.
- Chief McBee was initially very against this schedule for many reasons
- Required a super majority vote to go to trial
- 1st vote was at 64% to go to trial – No votes were counted as a "NO" votes
- 2nd vote after 9 months was 88% to continue 48/96's
- Currently now at a 92-94% acceptance rate
- Initially this was brought to the Fire Protection Board, and they voted against it.
- Was again brought to the Board by the Chief to help with the small percentage wage increase. Used basically in Union negotiations.
- "We can't give them much of a raise this year, so let's let them try out this 48/96 schedule"
- McBee talked a lot about the "study "that was conducted by the sleep doctors and with St. Anthony's Hospital.
- Sick leave initially had dramatically reduced
- Sick leave still down at this time compared to original schedule
- Accidents – no changes that can be contributed to 48/96 schedule
- No changes in exposure incidents that can be contributed to 48/96's
- They have a 5 hour clause that says if a unit or station does not receive 5 hours of down time (not consecutive) or a 2nd alarm fire, the BC and station officers have the liberty to change out "sister stations"
- They have actually moved personnel 9 times since the schedule started
- Train busy stations the 1st day and slower stations the 2nd day
- Had NO increase in citizen complaints on new schedule

- Require stations to only shop 1 time for the 48 hours.
- Decreases fuel costs
- Citizen shopping complaints have decreased
- Better attitude on inspections – increased moral
- Have consecutive days for preplans and inspection follow-ups
- With tele-staff and Outlook, communications have improved
- "If you're looking for this schedule to dramatically improve customer service, it's probably not going to do that, but the thing to remember is that there is NO documentation that proves it will decrease customer service either"

<u>Flagstaff Fire Department</u>

- City does not recognize Union
- 7 stations
- Conducted a formal work group with Council – Work Session
- Had unilateral opt-out provision for:
    - City Administration
    - Fire Administration
    - Employee group
- Some difficulties with communication between shifts and Fire Administration
    - Communication improved after getting email and staffing access for people at their home. (like our lancelot and tele-staff)
- Specific measurements during trial period
    - Employee surveys
    - Turnout time
    - Accidents
    - Injuries
    - Inspections
    - Training hours
    - Physical fitness hours
- Required some payroll modifications
- "It was a way to empower my employees that essentially didn't cost me a dime"
- "It's what the employee group wanted, so I stood behind them"