



NIAS Standard Operating Procedure

Management of Rest Breaks

SOP Reference:	Ops/02/020	Version:	1.3
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With effect from:	06.05.2024	Review Date:	30.11.2024
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Also refer to:	
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Superseded SOP:	
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For Action:	Operational Managers West and Southeast All staff
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For Information:	ASAMs, all Operational Managers DCMs and EAC staff RMC Manager and Staff
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	Name	Position
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Date	Version	Description	Approved By
06.05.2024	1.3	Applicable to staff working temporary rotas at Omagh 2 and Derrriaghy 2 Stations	

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure consistent management of rest breaks for all operational staff
- 1.2 To make sure that wherever possible, crews/individuals will receive a rest break within the rest break window
- 1.3 To ensure our staff are not put an undue risk as a result of not having appropriate rest breaks, in order to protect patient safety

2.0 Principles

- 2.1 Health, safety and welfare considerations must underpin the working arrangements for all Trust employees
- 2.2 All staff to which this procedure applies are required to adhere to the processes outlined
- 2.3 EAC/Operational Managers are required to ensure its effective implementation
- 2.4 The procedure supports the health and wellbeing of our staff through improved rest break compliance, which will be monitored and reported as part of normal Trust processes
- 2.5 Staff are encouraged to keep food and drink with them in their vehicle to ensure they are prepared for when they are deployed to their rest break location, as well as to keep hydrated during their shift

3.0 Scope:

- 3.1 This procedure applies to all NIAS staff working on front line operational vehicles, irrespective of type, and includes Double Crewed Ambulances (DCAs), Rapid Response Vehicles (RRVs) and Operational Officers

- 3.2 Due to the dynamic and specialist nature of their roles, this policy does not apply to Critical Care Paramedics, HEMS or Hazardous Area Response Teams who are responsible for ensuring their own appropriate rest and refreshment during their shifts

- 3.3 All staff that this procedure applies to must read, understand, and always adhere to this procedure

4.0 Definitions:

- 4.1 Throughout this Procedure the term “rest break” is used to refer to a period where crews/individuals will rest from operational duties and consume food. This replaces the previous use of the term “meal break”

5.0 Rest Break Arrangements:

- 5.1 The Table below sets out the main elements of the Rest Break arrangements

Shift Length	Rest Break	Rest Break Window
11 hours or more	45 minutes	Between 5 th and 7 th hour of the shift
≥ 9 hours but < 11 hours	45 minutes	Between 4 th and 6 th hour of the shift
Less than 9 hours	30 minutes	Between 3 rd and 5 th hour of shift

- 5.2 If a crew or individual is at a Trust Ambulance Station, or returning to base or nearest location when they enter their rest break window, EAC will determine the

appropriate break start time, taking account of restocking, cleaning and/or refueling requirements

5.3 When a crew clears from a patient or hospital the following applies

Crews/individual clearing in the first hour of the rest break window	Crews/individual clearing after the 1st hour of the rest break window	Crews/individual clearing after the rest break window has ended
<p>EAC will return staff to their base station if the travel time to the base station does not exceed 15 minutes.</p> <p>If this cannot be achieved, then the rest break will be taken at the nearest NIAS location as advised by EAC</p>	<p>Break will be taken at the nearest NIAS location as advised by EAC</p>	<p>The crew/individual is now protected as this is the end of the break window and the priority is to get staff a break as quickly as possible. The break will be taken at the nearest NIAS location as directed by EAC (unless in the last hour of the shift – refer to 5.7)</p>
<p>Crews/individuals remain available for CATEGORY 1 CALLS and HOT 1 BACKUP and potential/declared major incident calls</p>	<p>Crews/individuals remain available for CATEGORY 1 CALLS and HOT 1 BACKUP and potential/declared major incident calls</p>	<p>Crews/individuals remain available for Category 1 CPR in progress/HOT 1 backup to CPR in progress calls potential/declared major incident calls</p>
<p>During all rest breaks, crews/individuals may volunteer to respond to General Broadcast requests</p>		

5.4 If a crew/individual wishes to go to a food outlet for their break instead of a NIAS location then EAC should be supportive of this. The expectation however is that

crew/individual make their way to a food outlet within a reasonable amount of time, using the most direct route and do not delay. EAC is responsible for monitoring this and checking in with crew/individual as appropriate as part of overseeing the resource availability for their area

- 5.5 In all instances where a crew/individual take their rest break at a location other than their base station, each individual crew member may claim subsistence for food in accordance with Agenda for Change, Section 18, Day Subsistence. The current allowance is £5.00
- 5.6 When a NIAS location is at full capacity, EAC should allocate the rest break at the next nearest suitable location
- 5.7 Every effort must be made by EAC staff to avoid a crew/individual not being able to complete their break within the rest break window. This will include the use of other resources to relieve crews/individuals who are at risk of missing the window. In such circumstances, crews/individuals cannot refuse to be relieved to facilitate their break
- 5.8 Where a crew/individual have not had a rest break and enter the last 60 minutes of their shift, they must be returned to their base Station and managed as per End of Shift Procedures
- 5.9 During periods of CSP Level 3 and Level 4, Tactical Managers may consider the temporary suspension of rest break arrangements to protect patient safety

6.0 Interrupting a rest break

- 6.1 If a crew/individual is interrupted they will return to their original location for break or a new location as directed by EAC

- 6.2 If a crew/individual is interrupted in the first 30 minutes, the full break will be reallocated immediately after they are clear. If the interruption occurs after the first 30 minutes of break, staff will have the remainder of the break rebooked either after they have cleared or at an agreed time before the end of their shift
NB: When the rest break length is 30 minutes, a 20 minute interruption and reallocation will apply
- 6.3 Crews/individuals who have been disturbed from a rest break, will be stood down immediately if the call is downgraded from Category 1
- 6.4 Crews may volunteer to respond to a general broadcast request whilst on their rest break. In such circumstances, section 6.2 will apply

7.0 Review of this SOP

This SOP will be reviewed annually or more frequently if a significant change occurs. Review will include management and Staff side representatives prior to any changes.