



Call 101

Working on-call is part of residency training. It should be noted that on-call shifts are connected to standard duty hours – shift based duty hours are separate. Here are a few facts regarding on-call duty hours to start with:

- 1) Call stipends – you are not ‘paid’ to perform on-call. You receive a ‘stipend’ in recognition of the work being performed outside of standard duty hours. You cannot take the call stipend and divide it by the hours worked to come up with a ‘hourly wage’.
- 2) Call shifts – often are a great place of learning. However, you are not the Most Responsible Physician (MRP). You should always have support.

Call Shifts

Here’s a summary of the Agreement guidelines for on-call shifts. It should be noted that there are only two types of call shifts – however, there are many different ways that call actually occurs.

Article 23.04 speaks to the type of call shift.

23.04 On-call Duty Hour

- a) On-call duty hours refer to those times the Resident Physician carries clinical responsibilities beyond the standard duty hours defined in Article 23.02. This typically includes evenings, overnight, and weekends. For the purpose of this Article, a weekend will refer to the period of time from 1800 hours Friday to 0600 hours Monday. Two (2) types of on-call duty hours are recognized in practice:
 - i. In-house call:

In-house call refers to clinical service, or immediate availability for such service, provided by the Resident Physician beyond the standard duty hours, where the Resident Physician is required to remain in the Training Facility for that time period.
 - ii. Home call:

Home call refers to clinical service, or immediate availability for such service, provided by the Resident Physician beyond the standard duty hours, where the Resident Physician is not required to remain in the Training Facility for that time period.

What this means:

“Home” call can require you to stay in the Training Facility or return to the Training Facility – you are just able to go home after the clinical service performed in complete.

“In-house” call requires you to stay in the Training Facility for the entire duration of the call shift.

Article 23.05 speaks to the number and timing of in-house call shifts. Important items to note:

- 1) For a 28 day block – maximum number of in-house call shifts is 7 (with a maximum of 4 shifts in a 10 day period)
- 2) Guaranteed post-call day – meaning no consecutive traditional in-house call shifts
- 3) Work only on portions of two weekends – the weekend begins at 1800 Friday
- 4) Work only on two consecutive weekends – this might require communication between rotations

Article 23.06 speak to the number and timing of home call shifts. Important items to note:

- 1) For a 28 day block – maximum number of home call shifts is 9 (with a maximum of 4 shifts in a 10 day period)
- 2) No guaranteed post-call day – maximum of 3 consecutive home call shifts
- 3) Work only on portions of two weekends – the weekend begins at 1800 Friday
- 4) Work only on two consecutive weekends – this might require communication between rotations

In addition to the Agreement guidelines, many programs have Alternative Duty Schedules (Article 23.08) which allows for different call scheduling. These schedules are created by resident physicians in the form of a Letter of Understanding (LOU). Each LOU needs to be approved by the program, PARA, AHS, and PGME to ensure that the schedule creates better patient care and better resident physician wellness.

Programs with LOUs are required to provide those the LOU to off-service resident physicians along with the call schedule.

Other duty hours information

There are two additional topics regarding duty hours that need to be highlighted:

1) Back-up Call

Some programs have formal back-up on-call scheduling systems, while other programs have ‘unofficial’ back-up call systems in place. Regardless of the system being used, the following needs to be occurring:

- Being scheduled for back-up call is the same as being scheduled for call – as individual are not free the shift (ex. They cannot have a glass of wine nor be more than 20 minutes away from the site)
- The shift(s) need to be included in the call maximum for the block – if the combined on-call shifts and back-up call shifts do not exceed the maximum number of allowed call shifts then no LOU is needed by the program.
- Individuals are eligible for the ‘home call’ stipend unless they are called into the Training Facility and meet the ‘switched call’ stipend rate

2) Rounding (Article 35.05(f))

- Rounding is only meant to be done on an exception basis – if it is absolutely necessary for an individual who is not scheduled to work is required to come into the Training Facility.

- It is not meant to be used to ensure 'extra' coverage and circumvent the Resident Physician Agreement's requirement for individuals to have two weekends free from service each block
- The rounding stipend is larger than the weekend home call stipend rate because it recognizes that the individual is coming into the Training Facility on a day they are not supposed to be working.

Call Stipends

Here is a summary of the Agreement guidelines on call stipends. There are only two call stipend rates – home and in-house. Some home calls are converted to 'switched' call for stipend purposes (but not call shift scheduling purposes).

Article 35.05 speaks to the call stipends. Both in-house and home call stipends have different rates for weekday and weekend days. Important items to note:

- 1) In-house call stipend rate
 - Shift needs to be 12 hours or longer with 1 hour between 2400-0600
 - Stipend rate paid is based on the day the shift commences (meaning working into Saturday receives the weekday rate)
 - Rates: \$118.02 (weekday); \$178.72 (weekend/Named holiday)
- 2) Home call stipend rate
 - Shift has no minimum hours worked (meaning that the home call stipend rate is the default for all work performed outside of standard duty hours)
 - Stipend rate paid is based on the day the shift commences (meaning working into Saturday receives the weekday rate)
 - Rates: \$59.01 (weekday); \$89.35 (weekend/Named holiday)
 - Switched call occurs if an individual works either 4 hours (with at least 1 hours between 2400-0600) in the Training facility or 6 hours in the Training facility
 - Switched call shifts receive the in-house call stipend rate

Tracking Call Stipends

It is important that you track call stipends – to make sure you are receiving payment for all shifts worked.

- Errors will only be corrected from the 12 month period prior to the discovery of the error per the AHS Payroll Practices Policy.
- Any discrepancies need to be reported first to the Program Administrator who will then facilitate a correction with AHS.
- AHS has a schedule for stipend payments – typically payments for Block 1 occur in early September then for all other Blocks payment occurs within 4 weeks of the end of the block.

Here is the link to a sample call stipend tracking spreadsheet that can be used to assist in tracking call stipends.