

A little history of the work schedule for the past 75 years-

Since hiring the first ten paid men in 1949, the work schedule for firefighters has changed many times. The volunteer fire chief in each station set the work hours for employees to meet the individual department's needs.

1949—The first ten Firefighters worked day work Monday through Friday, either ten or twelve-hour shifts, 50 to 60 hours per week. There were fourteen fire stations at the time, and only ten volunteer chiefs decided to hire a firefighter. The other four original firefighter positions would be added by the end of 1951.

By the end of 1953, fourteen additional firefighters were hired, and all fire stations now had two firefighters per station. They worked day work; some started at 0700 and others at 0900. A temporary rank structure was implemented for the paid personnel. The senior firefighter was given the rank of Engineer II, and the less senior was given the rank of Engineer I.

1954—The VFDs realized a need for nighttime coverage in some but not all fire stations. In the stations that needed night coverage, the two firefighters rotated between 12-hour days and 12-hour nights, changing each week.

1960— When the firefighters were hired, they did not work for a department head but instead fell under the direction of the Board of Supervisors. Any employee working under the board could not work more than 50 hours a week. A push by the Paid Fireman's Association was a third paid firefighter was hired for each station to reduce work hours from sixty to fifty per week. One firefighter worked days, while the other two rotated between days and nights.

1962—This would be the first time paid firefighters staffed the station 24/7/365, including weekends.

When Chief Willis Burton was hired as the new Director of Fire Services, he was appointed to the Fire Commission as non-voting ex-officio member. This appointment to the fire commission was not well received by the Fire Commission or Volunteer Fire Chiefs. Chief Burton was only allowed to answer questions and provide information when requested by the members of the commission.

From 1963 to 1967, Chief Burton worked closely with the fire commission, paid fireman's association, and the Volunteer Fire Chief's Association. The volunteer chiefs still dictated the work schedule for their stations. This would all change in 1968 when the Board of Supervisors appointed Chief Burton as the Chair of the fire commission.

1963- 1966— Staffing had increased to 81 field personnel with six firefighters in each fire station, 4 fire marshals, and 1 fire chief.

1965—Work schedules in each station were still under the direction of the volunteer chief. The different schedules consisted of 24 on 24 off, 24/48, or all personnel on day work with one assigned to nights. Stations bordering other paid FD districts would adopt their schedules, i.e., Alex 4/4/4, Arl 24/48, and DCFD five 24-hour shifts within two weeks.

1968— Many changes took place, and staffing was increased in all stations to 220 field personnel, fire chief, deputy fire chief, two training officers, seven captains, twelve lieutenants, thirty-eight technicians, and 140 firefighters.

Work schedule responsibility changed from the volunteer chiefs to Chief Burton, the Fire Director. A permanent rank structure was formalized, placing a captain in stations that had more than ten personnel and lieutenants in stations with fewer personnel. The station officer was working straight day work, and the rest of the personnel were divided into three shifts. This would be the first time all stations worked the same shift schedule. The rotating shift was the 4/4/4 schedule. This shift consisted of four 10-hour days, four 14-hour nights, and a four-day break, working a 56-hour work week.

The rank of Engineer I and II was eliminated when captains and lieutenants were assigned. All Engineer I & II positions were renamed technicians, and the technicians were appointed shift leaders for the three shifts.

1983— Station captains were assigned shift work. Before 1983, shifts had lieutenants and sergeants as shift leaders.

April 30, 1983 —The 4/4/4 shift was changed to a 24-hour shift. The schedule rotated around a nine-day cycle, and personnel worked an average of 56 hours a week. Personnel worked 24 on, 24 off, 24 on, 24 off, 24 on, and then a four-day break. This is the shift schedule that is still in place.

Thanks to Domenick Iannelli for all the research on this project.

Note Page;

Information from BOS creation of the Fire Services 6/12/1963 effective 10/1/1963

***WHEREAS under provisions contained in certain Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, namely, Chapter 392 of the Acts of 1940 as amended by Chapter 40***

***of the Acts of 1945, and Chapter 370 of the Acts of 1930 as amended by Chapter 301 of the Acts of 1944, Chapter 44 of the Acts of 1948 and Chapter 472 of the Acts of 1954,.....***

***WHEREAS~ it appears desirable in the public interest that specific regulations be promulgated governing the organization of the Fire Services recommended by the Fairfax County Fire Commission, including the scope of duties and responsibilities for the Administrative Officer of the Fire Services, now, therefore, be it***

.....

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OF FIRE SERVICES**

***The Office of Fire Services shall be supervised by an Administrative***

***Officer who shall be responsible for maintaining liaison with the County fire fighting companies in conformance with Article I, Section 4(A) and (b) of the Administrative Code. He shall be responsible for Civil Defense within the Fire Service and shall coordinate same with the County Civil Defense program. In addition, he shall be responsible for the administration of personnel of all paid members of the County Fire Services, including personnel of the***

**Central Fire Control and the Office of the Fire Marshal. He shall also be responsible for the review and approval of requests for procurement through the County**

**Purchasing Agent, inventory of all fire fighting supplies and equipment, operating expenses, including motorized fire fighting and rescue equipment wherein co-ordinated action and effort would result in increased efficiency or economy for the County. In the preparation of the Fire Services annual budget, he shall consult with the Fire Commission and the President of the Fairfax County Volunteer Firemen's Association, and shall present to the County Executive for review justified estimates of expenditures necessary for fire protection of lives and property in the County.**

.....

**MEMBERSHIP OF FIRE COMMISSION**

.....

**The Administrative Officer shall be a non-voting ex-officio member of the Commission, attend all meetings practicable, and prepare the agendas for such meetings. He shall have the right to take part in all discussions, to present his views on all matters coming before the Commission, and to recommend and advise such action as he deems necessary for the best interest of the County.**