

Scottish Ambulance Service

Management of Rest Breaks

Standard Operating Procedure – Test of Change V1.0

Aim

To ensure appropriate and effective rest break management of all resources booked onto the C3 System for deployment and to improve rest break compliance, working to the principle that nobody should work more than 6 hours without a break.

Definition of a Rest Break

The definition of a rest break is a short period of time not less than 20 mins, undisturbed, which should not be taken at the commencement or end of the working day, where an employee is able to stop and relax, use facilities, or simply take time to clear their heads, therefore pause, and recharge.

Application

- Dispatchers within the Ambulance Control Centres (ACC) will be responsible for the consistent application of this Standard Operating Procedure.
- This applies to all operational colleagues booked onto the C3 system.

Policy

The Service gives an absolute commitment to provide rest breaks to all staff to whom this agreement applies. The SOP will apply to all Scottish Ambulance Service colleagues booked onto the C3 system for deployment.

This SOP looks to, organisationally, support Dispatchers within their decision making to balance operational colleague welfare and patient safety. To assist in this process, the following procedure should be followed:

- All rest breaks are agreed through partnership and identified through the C3 system.

- If a crew are split due to skill mix or doubled up for any reason, the dispatcher and crew should mutually agree on what shift code they will be using to book on (system accepts only 1 code) and the rest break window best suited to both parties.
- Where a crew are booking on late due to lie in, fatigue, compensatory rest or previous shift overrun, **the dispatcher and crew should mutually agree a shift code which reflects the shift now being worked rounded up to the nearest hour.**
- If a crew chooses to rest at a location other than their home station, they will only be assigned ILT and amber codes until they have returned to their normal response area. This will help ensure resources return to their areas after a rest break.

Rest Break Windows

- 8-hour shift – 1x RB window between 3rd and 5th hour
- 10-hour shift – 1x RB window between 4th and 6th hour
- 12-hour shift - 2x Rest Breaks (1x 25 mins and 1x 20 mins)

Windows: 3rd to 5th hour and 7th to 9th hour

- The agreed national Rest Break windows and durations are outlined in the table below:

Shift Length	No of Breaks	Window	Period Entitlement	Period Lengths
08 Hour	1	3 rd & 5 th Hour	30	30
10 Hour	1	4 th & 6 th Hour	38	38
12 Hour	2	3 rd & 5 th Hour and 7 th & 9 th Hour	45	25 +20

Procedure

Before and throughout rest period windows, operational crews will be protected from some incidents to prioritise a rest period as early as possible. Dispatchers within the Ambulance Control Centres will make every effort to allocate rest breaks at the earliest opportunity when rest period windows open in line with rest break windows. Crews will be returned to station as quickly as possible and should take the most direct route.

To ensure an appropriate response is maintained to the most time critical patients and major incidents, all staff as listed above will be required to remain available throughout their shift (except in the case of Special Break protection) for the following:

- All coded, clinically triaged ILT (Purple/Red) incidents
- Major Incidents
- SORT PDAs (SORT Teams only)

Note – clinically triaged incidents are incidents coded using MPDS by call handlers, or outcome codes by the Integrated Clinical Hub or Specialist Service Desk.

This is described in the procedures below:

Protection Prior to a Rest Break Window:

- Where a crew are on station, and in the 15 minutes prior to a rest period window opening the crew will have the opportunity to request their rest period early.
- A crew will not be allocated to a **TIMED ADMISSION or ROUTINE CALL** 1 hour prior to the rest break window opening.
- A crew will not be allocated to a **YELLOW** call 30 minutes prior to a rest break window opening.

Protection During a Rest Break Window:

- Where a staff member requests a break at the location they are currently in, this should be agreed, and the crew should be booked off.
- A crew will not be allocated to a **TIMED ADMISSION or ROUTINE CALL** until the rest break is complete.
- A crew will not be allocated to a **YELLOW** until the rest break is complete.
- If a crew reach the mid-point of the rest break window without commencing their rest break, they will no longer be allocated to an **AMBER** until the rest break is complete.
- Crews will only be allocated to a **PURPLE or RED** inter facility transfer where there is no other resource immediately available.

Protection After a Rest Break Window

- A crew will not be allocated to a **TIMED ADMISSION or ROUTINE CALL** until the rest break is complete.
- A crew will not be allocated to a **YELLOW** until the rest break is complete.
- A crew will not be allocated to an **AMBER** incident until the rest break is complete.
- Crews will only be allocated to a **PURPLE or RED** inter facility transfer where there is no other resource immediately available.

Special Break Protection

A Special Break is irrefusable in two scenarios within a shift:

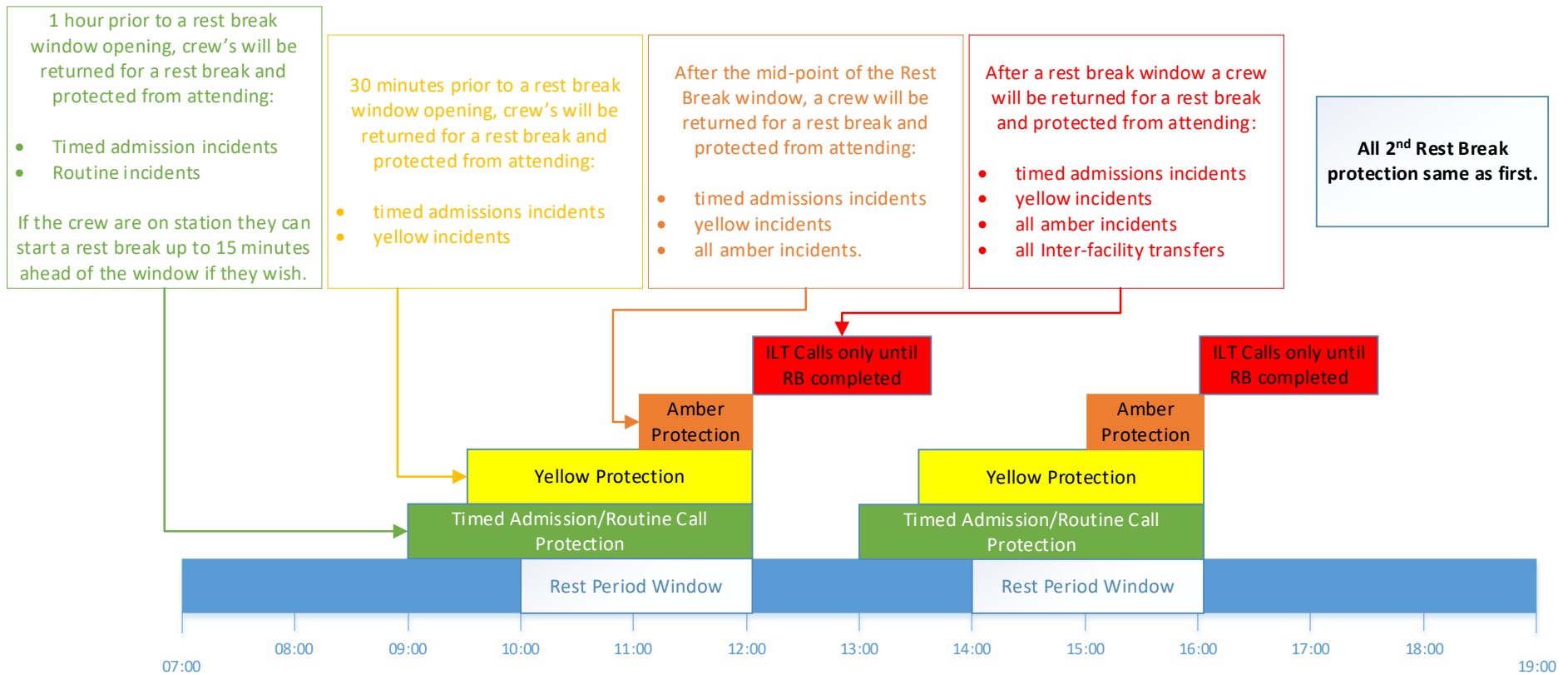
1. If a crew have not been rested by at the end of the first rest break window, they can request a **Special Break** for additional protection. Normally, this means they **take the remaining rest break time owed during the shift.**

Exception: If taking the full balance would leave the crew with **more than 6 hours left to work**, they only take the **first break balance now**, and the second break will happen in the next window.

2. A Special Break can also be requested if it has been **over 6 hours since the end of the last rest break**, and the crew still **have break time owed.**

Once special break protection is applied the crew will only be sent to **purple coded incidents or major incidents** until their owed break time is complete.

A graphic of these levels of protection can be found below:



Special Break Definition

Should a crew reach the end of their 1st rest break window, OR it has been more than 6 hours since the end of the previous rest break a special break can be requested.

During this time, a crew will be available for coded Purple and declared Major Incidents **only** until the shift rest break balance is complete.

Rest Break Disturbances

- A crew will only be disturbed from a rest break for a coded, clinically triaged ILT or a Major Incident.
- Dispatchers will make every effort to allocate or divert another resource, however, where there is no other response immediately available, a crew will have to be disturbed.
- If a crew has been disturbed when on a rest break, once clear from the incident, a crew will only be sent to **purple coded incidents or major incidents** until their owed break time is complete.

Exception: If taking the full balance would leave the crew with **more than 6 hours left to work**, they only take the **first break balance now**, and the second break will happen in the next window.

Special Break Disturbances

- In the event a crew request a special break and are disturbed for a purple coded incident or major incident, once clear from the incident the crew will **automatically be made unavailable until the owed break time is complete.**