



Star Wars

Tackling the culture of long hours

As inspectors we – like our other federated colleagues – hold the office of constable, and as such are not employees. Therefore our conditions of service are not in the main protected by employment law. This is one of the qualities that make police officers unique.

Our conditions of service are protected and regulated by Parliament which resulted in police regulations. These are laws of the land, with the same standing as any act that we enforce on behalf of the people we serve.

Two of the key differences unique to our rank are the 1994 Agreement, and rest day and public holiday working. In relation to the 1994 Agreement, there is a

You cannot be on a rest day on a public holiday; if the two clash you are entitled to another rest day.

myth that suggests: “When we became salaried we accepted working long hours for no extra money.”

This is not true. Neither side intended the Agreement to worsen the working conditions of the inspecting ranks, it intended ‘flexibility’ on both sides. The increase in our salary was never meant to compensate you for regularly working long, extended hours.

What the agreement changed principally was:

- removal of your right to compensation for working bank holidays, other than the day being re-rostered
- the removal of your right to compensation for cancelled rest days, irrespective of the notice given
- the removal of your right for casual overtime.

It was not intended to introduce a long-hours culture, indeed PNB (94/17) stated: “Both Staff Side and Official Side agree that such an agreement (long hours) would be contrary to the intention and spirit of the agreement.”

This point was reinforced in a Home Office Circular (21/97) which stated: “Inspectors and Chief Inspectors...

need to be able to plan both for their work and their personal and family commitments...

“For sound reasons to do with the health and welfare of the officer, the safety of others and effective working, no police officer should be required to work regular excessive hours, and, over a period of time, each officer should be allowed to take their full entitlement to days free from the requirements of duty. This is a particular consideration in the case of inspectors, chief inspectors and higher ranks, who are not paid overtime.”

On rest day and public holiday working, Police Regulations are very specific: “Every member of a police force of the rank of inspector or chief inspector shall, so far as the exigencies of duty permit be allowed a day’s leave on each public holiday and be granted rest days at the rate of two rest days in each week.” (Regulation 22, Annex E).

Simply put, you cannot be on a rest day on a public holiday; if the two clash you are entitled to another rest day. Inspectors who work a rest day have the compensation of taking them (exigencies of duty permitted) within 12 months of accruing them. You MUST take owed rest days within 12 months or you risk losing them.

The ICC aims to address the long hours culture and national misinterpretation of the 94 Agreement in the coming weeks, and you will see ICC posters reminding you of your rights and entitlements.

*Kevin Powell,
Number 3 Regional Inspectors’
Representative and ICC vice-chairman*

Why the title Star Wars? The badge of rank for inspecting ranks are the Bath Stars and this could be one of the biggest fights we will ever have. May the force be with you!