



What do I do if my Rest Days are cancelled?

A rest day can be cancelled for an exigency of the service. This is defined in Circular 86/9, “ as a pressing need or requirement that cannot be reasonably avoided. It relates to the situation at the time the duty is to be performed rather than when the cancellation is made. Therefore the requirement to change can be known about many months in advance but it is still an exigency”.

PNB 86/9 provides that although rest days can be cancelled for financial purposes, managers should also give full consideration to welfare, practical and operational issues.

The circular further states that you should be told about the requirement for change as soon as possible but at the latest by midnight on the calendar day before the changed duty is to be performed.

The reasons for change are too numerous to give details but the circular states that these could include, unforeseen public order situations, court attendance, and essential training. By giving such a wide set of examples the circular is indicating that managers have a lot of scope under the definition of exigency. Legal advice and challenges have shown that courts are very reluctant to interfere with a Chief Constables right to manage their resources in the most efficient way. Therefore a legal challenge over the definition of exigency is unlikely to be successful.

Given the above definition it is obvious that there are little protections in respect of the right for managers to cancel rest days. On this basis the Federation try to get managers to effectively plan and give as much notice as possible. However, you also have a role to play.

Police Regulations provide for payment if a rest day is cancelled with less than 15 days clear notice. If more than 15 days notice are provided then you should be notified of your alternative day off within 4 days of the notification to cancel. Whilst it is not an absolute right, good management practice would suggest that the alternative rest day should be on a similar day to that cancelled. This is particularly true for days cancelled at a weekend.

We are aware that very few officers insist on their rest day being re-rostered in accordance with regulations. It is the Federation position that you should ask for this to be done. When a cancelled rest day is left “in the book” as a rest day in lieu it has no protection. We are aware that it is often difficult to get that day back due to other commitments and staff shortages and some officers have excessive amounts of R.D.L.s as a consequence of this. However, once it is placed back on the roster it has the same protections as any other rest day. It doesn't have less status than other rest days because it is re-rostered and if a manager wants you to work that day then it has to be for a further exigency and you have to be once again provided with sufficient notice or receive payment if you do not. Cancelling a rest day and allowing it to be an R.D.L. means that it is the easy option. Placing it back on the roster makes managers manage and ensures that you get your time back.

Assist us to assist you and insist on the proper application of regulations.