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JAMAICA

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Circular No: 2

**Cabinet Secretary
Permanent Secretaries
Chief Executive Officers
Heads of Departments,
Agencies and Public Bodies**

Implementation of Staggered Working Hours in the Public Sector

Permanent Secretaries, Chief Executive Officers, Heads of Departments and Public Bodies are hereby advised that approval has been given for Staggered Working Hours (SWH) to be implemented in the public sector with effect from February 2, 2026.

1. Background

Section 3.3 of the Staff Orders for the Public Service (2004) provides basic guidelines for alternative work arrangements in the public service, but there has been no widescale implementation. Therefore, as a part of its ongoing transformation and modernization, the Government of Jamaica (GoJ), through the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MoFPS), is promoting Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) within the Public Sector on a phased basis commencing with Staggered Working Hours (SWH).

2. Purpose

This initiative aims to improve service delivery and promote work-life balance by allowing greater flexibility in scheduling. SWH reflects the Government's commitment to implement a people-centred and results-oriented public service, guided by principles of fairness, equity, and accountability.

3. Scope

These guidelines apply to non-shift employees to include temporary and fixed-term contract employment against established and non-established posts. They also provide the framework for the establishment, implementation, monitoring, and review of SWH arrangements.

The implementation of SWH do not change the conditions and requirements for Attendance and punctuality, as detailed in MOFPS Circular No. 41 # 5 dated November 12, 2008 and any noncompliance with these may result in appropriate disciplinary action.¹

If the organisational requirements change, the organisation reserves the right to make the necessary adjustments.

4. Definitions

- i. Core hours – The designated period during the workday when all employees utilising SWH are required to be present and available for work, regardless of individual start or end times. (e.g., 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday/10:30am -2:00pm Friday).

¹ The Public Service Regulations, 1961 (for public officers) and Disciplinary Policy for Public Bodies for other entities.

- ii. Coverage hours – The span of operational hours during which the entity remains open to the public.
- iii. Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) - adjustment(s) to the employee's regular work schedule for a specified period (not less than three (3) months) as agreed between the organisation and the employee.
- iv. Staggered Working Hours (SWH) – Employees start and finish work at different times to ensure the required coverage.
- v. HOE- Heads of Entities
- vi. MoFPS- Ministry of Finance and the Public Service

5. Eligibility

Non-shift employees will be eligible to apply for SWH regardless of seniority, assignment and tenure. *However, the exigencies of the service may require that the application be denied if the employee's work function can only fit in the standard group.*

6. Changes to agreed SWH

- i. Employee and supervisor meet and indicate challenges being encountered with agreed schedule.
- ii. Employee and supervisor discuss new preferred schedule.
- iii. Manager/supervisor to determine whether change can be facilitated and if yes indicate when the change can be facilitated.

Note: Employees should note that changes to schedules may not be immediate because it may affect scheduling and workflow, as well as work of other team members.

7. An evaluation of any SWH arrangement should be done to determine:

- i. Achievement of objectives.
- ii. Service delivery to internal and external customers.
- iii. Employee wellbeing and morale.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Ministry with responsibility for the Public Service

- i. Provide support to public sector entities as required;
- ii. Receive and analyse reports along with oversight partners (MLSS, OPM) on patterns, trends, effectiveness and efficiency of SWH for submission as requested;
- iii. Provide the GOJ Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Policy Framework to entities to identify, monitor and evaluate the risk associated with the implementation of SWH;

8.2 Permanent Secretaries/Chief Executive Officers/Heads of Departments/Entities

- i. Provide strategic leadership to embed a culture of managing employees in a SWH environment;
- ii. Review service requirements around peak hours, staffing levels or other operational issues;
- iii. Adopt/Adapt guidelines to guide the entity's implementation of SWH in keeping with the minimum standards set by MOFPS;

- iv. Develop, implement and monitor flexible schedules that balance operational demands and employee well-being; (See the sample schedule template below as a guide.)
- v. Establish an ad hoc committee (minimum 3 members) to hear appeals² in respect of SWH and recommend actions for final decision by the HoE;
- vi. Manage the risks associated with the SWH;
- vii. Submit bi-annual reports on the implementation and operations of SWH to the Ministry with responsibility for the Public Service, for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- viii. Provide final approval for all SWH issues;
- ix. Adhere to service excellence standards;
- x. Ensure SWH guidelines and work schedules are communicated to all staff; and
- xi. Discontinue any SWH arrangement that is not facilitating required outputs following careful analysis.

8.3 Human Resource Section

- i. Sensitise employees on SWH guidelines and work schedules;
- ii. Build the capacity of managers and supervisors to enable the execution of their HR roles and responsibilities and provide support to facilitate the implementation of SWH;
- iii. Manage the change necessary to support the implementation of SWH;
- iv. Maintain an attendance system in collaboration with Managers/Supervisors in keeping with agreed SWH schedules;
- v. Solicit and utilise employee feedback to make policy recommendations to the HoE as necessary;
- vi. Work with employees/ supervisors /managers/Heads of Unit/Branch/Division/Entity to manage grievances³;
- vii. Ensure adherence to all relevant legislation, policies and circulars;

8.4 Employees

- i. Discuss SWH preferences with managers/ supervisors⁴;
- ii. Adhere to scheduled hours as agreed and the entity's policy directives⁵;
- iii. Engage in the change management process;
- iv. Give feedback to the managers and supervisors on the effectiveness of the implementation;
- v. Meet service excellence standards;
- vi. Report any risks and/or issues to Managers/Supervisors.
- iv. Utilise Monitoring and Evaluation framework to review and make the necessary adjustments to the GOJ SWH policy guidelines as required.

² Where an appeal escalates to a formal grievance, the procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy for the Public Service should be followed.

³ Utilise the MoFP Grievance Policy for the Public Service, 2012.

⁴ An assessment must be completed by the employee to support the selection of the SWH

⁵ Changes to agreed SWH must be made in keeping with steps outlined

9. Sample Schedule Template (Entities may amend as relevant to their operation)

Group	Schedule	Core Hours Coverage	Comments
A	Mon–Thurs: 6:30 am – 3:00 pm Friday: 6:30 am – 2:00 pm	Mon–Thurs: 10:30 – 3:00 Friday: 10:30 – 2:00	Dawn Chasers
B	Mon–Thurs: 7:30 am – 4:00 pm Friday: 7:30 am – 3:00 pm	Mon–Thurs: 10:30 – 3:00 Friday: 10:30 – 2:00	Early commuters
C	Mon–Thurs: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm Friday: 8:30 am – 4:00 pm	Mon–Thurs: 10:30 – 3:00 Friday: 10:30 – 2:00	Standard group
D	Mon–Thurs: 9:30 am – 6:00 pm Friday: 9:30 am – 5:00 pm	Mon–Thurs: 10:30 – 3:00 Friday: 10:30 – 2:00	Late start option
E	Mon–Thurs: 10:30 am – 7:00 pm Friday: 10:30 am – 6:00 pm	Mon–Thurs: 10:30 – 3:00 Friday: 10:30 – 2:00	Night Owls

10. Oversight

Oversight of the SWH implementation will be undertaken by the MoFPS, MoLSS and the OPM.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

Each MDA shall assess the staggered work hours arrangements at least twice per year to determine effectiveness in improving service delivery, staff satisfaction, and efficiency. Measurements could include service response times, output delivery, staff engagement levels, and staggered working hours adherence. Organizations should track implementation and operational metrics and employee feedback to make evidenced based adjustments.

Reports on the SWH arrangements should be sent to the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service to facilitate the overall monitoring of the programme.

12. Approvals

Approval of staggered working hours will be dependent on the needs of the employees and the organisation and should benefit both parties.

A request for a change in work schedule may be deferred or denied where this is not in the interest of the organisation.

13. Termination of Staggered Working Hours

Written communication is to be submitted to the Human Resource Department through the Supervisor and/or Head of Department by an employee who wishes to terminate his/her staggered working hours arrangement.

The organisation reserves the right to amend or discontinue any staggered working hours arrangement at any time if, in its opinion, the needs of the organization are not being served. Notwithstanding, the organisation will endeavour to give the employee a minimum of three days' notice of discontinuation of their staggered working hours.

14. Administration of Staggered Working Hours

It is the responsibility of management to ensure that the staggered working hours are administered in an equitable and consistent manner. Failure to do so may result in employee morale issues, resistance to the system, and failure to achieve or maintain desired service delivery levels.

It is to be noted that it is the responsibility of management (Supervisor and/or Head of Department) to notify the Human Resource Section of SWH work schedules and any changes thereto.

15. Implementation

SWHs may be initiated by the organisation or requested by the employee. A request for SWH may be initiated by the HoE to one or more employees and must be presented in writing (e-mail or hard copy) to each employee, indicating the proposed changes to their established work schedule. Managers have the right to amend the SWH schedule to suit service delivery needs of the organisation.

SWHs will therefore require greater levels of trust, confidence and teamwork between managers and supervisors and their direct reports. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the essential principle of any staggered working hours arrangement is that 'work comes first'. Therefore, service to customers, whether internal or external, must not be negatively impacted as a result of the implementation of SWH.

16. Evaluation

An evaluation of any SWH arrangement should be done to determine:

- i. Achievement/maintenance of organisational objectives.
- ii. Service delivery to internal and external customers.
- iii. Employee wellbeing and morale.

17. Miscellaneous

Persons who have agreed SWH arrangements will not be eligible for either taxi or supper allowances.

18. Appendices

- i. SWH Logical Framework Model
- ii. SWH Readiness Assessment
- iii. SWH Application Form



Darlene Morrison, C.D.
Financial Secretary

Staggered Working Hours (SWH) Logical Framework Model

Objective: To assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of Staggered Work Hours (SWH) across the public sector to determine the continuation, modification, or scaling of the policy.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Indicators
SWH Guidelines and Templates, Human Resource (HR) Manuals/Policies, operational plan to facilitate SWH, GoJ Risk Management model	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate Stakeholder Consultations 2. Conduct Data Gathering 3. Schedule Sensitisation sessions around implementation 4. Develop Change Management Plans 5. Conduct Interviews to establish baselines 6. Develop Risk Strategy and Plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation Report 2. Survey Findings 3. Consultation and Sensitisation Logs 4. Risk Strategy and Plan 5. Change Management Plans 6. SWH Standard Operating Procedures 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved Service Delivery 2. Public Sector adoption of SWH as a workforce planning tool 3. Dynamic workforce deployment 4. Increased desire for other Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) modalities 5. Increased operational efficiency 6. Increased levels of employee engagement in designated duties 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. number of approved SWH schedules created for employees in accordance with operational demands and service delivery requirements 2. number of sensitisations conducted advising employees of SWH & other FWA 3. number of appeals adjudicated 4. number of capability sessions held with Managers/Supervisors 5. number of change management sensitisations conducted regarding SWH 6. number of agreements signed 7. attendance compliance rate 8. feedback response rate 9. percentage (%) of positive/negative responses
Assumptions				
For the Evaluation to be successful, the assumptions are that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Heads of Entities (HoEs) will be fully engaged and lead the implementation 2. there are no budget restraints within the entities for acquiring resources or building capability 			Factors outside the scope of the Evaluation are considerations for the other proposed FWA modalities.	

Participants in Activities

- Heads of Entities (HoEs)
- Managers/Supervisors
- Human Resource Managers
- Union/Staff representatives
- Employees
- Corporate Planner

<u>Evaluation Question</u>	<u>Indicator</u>
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1. Have the HoE, Manager/Supervisors engaged stakeholders in sensitisation sessions? (yes/no)	number of sensitisations conducted advising employees of SWH & other FWA
2. Did your entity adopt the general guidelines? (yes/no)	number of sensitisations conducted advising employees of SWH & other FWA
3. Has a committee been established to address appeals? (yes/no)	number of appeals adjudicated
4. Has a risk management strategy been prepared? (yes/no)	number of capability sessions held with Managers/Supervisors
5. Has an SWH capability plan been established? (yes/no)	number of capability sessions held with Managers/Supervisors
6. Have stakeholders been engaged in change management sessions? (yes/no)	number of change management sensitisations conducted regarding SWH
7. Has an attendance system been developed? (yes/no)	attendance compliance rate
8. Does an employee feedback system exist? (yes/no)	feedback response rate and percentage (%) of positive/negative responses

SWH Readiness Assessment

1. This worksheet guides Head of Entities on the use of Staggered Working Hours (SWH) for staff members. This allows entities to determine the SWH for eligible employees¹. Staff members are expected to be present during a predetermined core period of the working day.
2. Determining the entities SWH requires ongoing consultations between management and employees.
3. Entities are encouraged to undertake their own review to suit their particular circumstances.

Please read each statement carefully and select only one (1) answer for each statement- **Yes, Maybe or No.**

	QUESTIONS	Yes	Maybe	No
a)	Will scheduled meetings, coordination of projects, etc. be affected?			
b)	Can the job duties be performed equally well under the proposed SWH?			
c)	Would the proposed work schedule negatively affect the meeting of organisational commitments/objectives?			
d)	Are there any safety concerns or building access issues particularly if the employee will be arriving earlier or leaving later than normal?			
e)	Are there potential problems or obstacles related to this request? ²			
f)	Does the job require daily face-to-face time with other employees or third parties?			
g)	Is the employee self-directed and comfortable working without close supervision?			

Administering an SWH Request

1. Approved applications require the signature of all parties and should be filed with the Human Resource Section. The decision to approve the staff members' request should not adversely affect other staff and must satisfy the entity's operational needs.
2. Declined applications should be accompanied by clear explanations of the reasons why the requests were not approved. Employees may re-apply based on the explanation given for the non-approval or appeal the decision.

¹ With the exception of f), where a No has been indicated in the table below, a determination should be made for suitability.

² If yes, state how they will be addressed in writing and attach to the employee's application form.

Staggered Working Hours (SWH) Application Form

Employee Section

Full Name: _____

Position: _____

Unit/Division: _____ CUG/Cell: () -

Application Date: _____

Days of the Week	Start/End Times	Proposed Start/End Times	Hours worked
Sunday	8:30 am to 5:00 pm		
Monday	8:30 am to 5:00 pm		
Tuesday	8:30 am to 5:00 pm		
Wednesday	8:30 am to 5:00 pm		
Thursday	8:30 am to 5:00 pm		
Friday	8:30 am to 4:00 pm		
Saturday	8:30 am to 5:00 pm		
Total			

Employee Signature: _____

Manager/Supervisor Section

Recommended: _____ (Y/N)

Effective Start date: _____ Effective End date: _____

Manager/Supervisor Name: _____

Signature: _____

Division Head/Head of Entity Section

Date: _____

Approved _____ (Y/N) Date: _____

If declined, please state brief reason here:

Division Head/Head of Entity Name: _____

Signature: _____

Human Resource Management Division Section

Received by Human Resource Representative:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____