

TO: Exercise Staff
FROM: Director Chris Herrick
DATE: October 1, 2015
SUBJECT: State of Vermont Policy for Payment for Exercise Staff for Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Sponsored Exercises

It is a statewide goal that all Homeland Security Exercise & Evaluation Program (HSEEP) trained personnel participate, to the maximum extent possible in all DEMHS sponsored exercises. It has been recognized that volunteer HSEEP trained personnel have a difficult time assisting in exercise conduct due to daytime commitments related to their employment. Although much effort has been taken to include all HSEEP trained personnel in DEMHS sponsored exercises in Vermont, it has been noted that many have not supported an exercise due to the financial burdens placed on them when they leave their jobs. It is therefore the intent of the DEMHS to set a statewide policy. This policy shall take effect immediately and will apply to exercise staff in all fiscal years.

The policy set forth shall be for all HSEEP trained personnel that support as exercise staff, all DEMHS sponsored exercises.

FULL TIME PERSONNEL: Personnel employed in a full time status at a local agency shall continue to receive the rate of time and one-half when participating as exercise staff during exercise conduct activity. The local agency may request reimbursement in the form of a grant from DEMHS. The request and application for the grant must be submitted at least 90 prior to exercise conduct.

PART-TIME PERSONNEL: If a local agency has budgeted employees to work less than a full time schedule, the time that these employees spend traveling to and from, as well participating as exercise staff during exercise conduct activity above and beyond their regularly scheduled hours can be considered overtime and therefore covered. For example, if an agency budgets an individual for 20 hours per week but DEMHS sponsored exercise activities require that person to work 25 hours in a week, the additional 5 hours spent as exercise staff may be reimbursable from a grant from DEMHS. The request and application for the grant must be submitted at least 90 prior to exercise conduct.

PAID-FOR-CALL, PAID-ON-CALL, AND PAID-PER-CALL VOLUNTEER

PERSONNEL: If an agency relies upon paid-for-call, paid-on-call, and/or paid-per-call volunteer personnel and opts to include them as exercise staff during DEMHS sponsored exercises, the local agency may request reimbursement to pay volunteers for their time involved in these activities in accordance with established processes, to include both hourly and flat-rate payment in the form of a grant from DEMHS. The request and application for the grant must be submitted at least 90 prior to exercise conduct.

STIPENDS FOR VOLUNTEER HSEEP TRAINED PERSONNEL: Stipends for purely volunteer HSEEP trained exercise staff to participate during DEMHS sponsored exercises, are

allowable when volunteers are completely unpaid and no legal agreement exists to support pay for exercise activities. The following justification must be made in order to provide this stipend:

- The difficulty states/locals are facing getting responders to participate as unpaid volunteers.
- Why volunteers who are already willing to provide time without pay are unwilling to give extra time for exercises.

The justification must be based on a finding that paying volunteers is a primary factor in enticing them to act as exercise support staff. The justification must explain how participation in DEMHS exercises makes participants better at the work performed during their regular volunteer responsibilities.

It shall be the State's policy that all HSEEP trained personnel described above will be paid at a maximum rate of \$25.00 per hour for acting as exercise staff for DEMHS sponsored exercises.

It shall be the State's policy that those HSEEP trained personnel described above will be reimbursed for authorized automobile mileage actually and necessarily traveled to and from a DEMHS sponsored exercise at the same rate utilized by the State, unless the personnel is traveling in a State-owned or leased vehicle.

It shall be the State's policy that those HSEEP trained personnel described above will be reimbursed for lodging, if the travel distance to the exercise location is more than 50 miles from the personnel's home. The maximum allowable reimbursement for lodging shall be the state government rate offered by the facility providing overnight accommodations to personnel.

All agencies must submit a declaration to the DEMHS on how it pays its personnel for reference.