

Clause 16 and Appendix 2

16.0 Relief Management

- 16.1 All employees employed as relievers or working on a reliever roster, are to report for duty at 0800 as unless otherwise directed in accordance with either the run description or Appendix 2. Should the reliever not be required for the previously rostered duty, in order to meet the operational needs of the employer, the reliever may be reassigned, on a duty-by-duty basis, to fulfill that operational need provided that they are qualified and skilled to do so. That duty may not be longer than the duration of the previously rostered duty. This provision applies to all relievers.
- 16.2 The employer may put in place appropriate arrangements for the administration of relievers. Arrangements for the uses of relievers are set out in Appendix 2.
- 16.3 Nothing in this clause shall be read as to disallow an existing practice or require an employer to put in place a different arrangement than in place at the time that this MECA is ratified.

Appendix 2 Relief Management

- 1.1 Subject to the RMO giving reasonable notice to the employer in terms of planned leave, the responsibility to arrange cover for RMOs on leave lies with the employer. It is not the responsibility of individual employees to find cover for their own leave. The employer will take all reasonable steps to ensure sufficient cover is available to permit RMOs to take leave.
- 1.2 Leave areas – RMO MECA outline of entitlements
- Annual Leave
 - Medical Education Leave – Conference Leave/Study Leave
 - Sick Leave/Discretionary Sick Leave
 - Special Leave
 - Days in lieu of Public Holidays
 - Parental Leave
 - Bereavement/Tangihanga Leave
 - Jury Service Leave
 - EREL
 - Cover for RMOs on night duty
 - Unpaid leave
 - Shift leave
 - Representatives leave
 - Military leave
- 1.3 Planned vs unplanned leave
- 1.3.1 Planned leave

Planned leave relief includes night relief, annual, medical education, days in lieu, parental, jury, EREL, planned special leave and long term and elective sick leave. Long term planned leave relief may also be covered by employment of staff on fixed term agreements. Relievers must not be used to supplement staffing levels required to meet service demand except as provided for within this appendix and clause 16.1.

1. A planned leave reliever covers the roster of an absent RMO. A minimum of 14 days' notice of the RMO's roster must be given except in circumstances that:
 - (a) where a planned leave reliever is not allocated to cover planned leave, they can be allocated to cover an unexpected absence of an RMO during the ordinary hours. Clause 4 and 5 of the short notice leave relievers provision below shall apply in these circumstances.
 - (b) where a planned leave reliever is not allocated to cover planned leave, they can be allocated to report for duty relief. Clause 4 of the report for duty relievers provision below shall apply in these circumstances.
2. Generally, one leave reliever will be required for each 7 HOs/SHOs employed. Generally, one leave reliever will be required for each 5.5 Registrars employed. In addition, where an RMO is on a night shift, a reliever may need to be provided to cover that RMO's rostered day duties where night shifts are not covered internally as a regular predictable part of the rostering pattern.
3. Priority must be given to keeping planned leave relievers on consistent specialties, wards and teams as much as possible. For example, keeping a medical RMO on medical cover, or where a period of night cover is followed by annual leave cover keeping the same RMO on the same team or ward.
 - (a) Discipline preference: Where possible house officers and SHOs preference for surgical or medical specialty will be respected. Where an RMO specifies a preference, e.g., medical or surgical cover that they should have priority to cover in these areas.
 - (b) Team continuity: An individual reliever should remain with the one team or ward as much as possible.
 - (c) RMOs can only be allocated to cover runs that are within their scope of practice.
4. Limits on hours apply to relievers.
5. Relievers must have the skills to provide cover for the RMOs they are relieving. A SHO reliever may have the skills to cover both house officers and SHO duties and may also act up as a Registrar. Registrar relief must be provided by those with the skills and experience in the specific discipline.
6. Availability for adult cover must be separated from that for paediatric or O&G cover unless agreed by the RMO concerned.
7. Where RMOs employed as relievers are pooled, they shall be paid in accordance with clause 12.1.3 & 12.1.4.).

1.3.2 Short Notice

In circumstances where the DHB chooses to include this component into the relief schedules and /or rosters, the system outlined below is to be adopted. If short notice relief is not provided for, the current contractual provisions provides that cover for leave can be provided by the payment of additional duties, cross cover, locum payments, closing services and cancelling clinics.

1. Short notice leave relievers are allocated in one of two ways.
 - (a) *Relief Pool* - Short notice relievers are added to the relief pool and each member of the relief pool is allocated to short notice relief for periods of time. House officers and medical registrars are examples where this method of short notice relief is likely to be appropriate.

- (b) *On a Run* - Each of the RMOs on a run or group of runs each takes a turn at short notice relief. During this period the RMO is identified as the short notice reliever and the provisions relating to short notice relief apply to them. An additional reliever must be supplied to the relief pool to provide cover for the RMO on short notice relief (much as night relievers do).
2. All RMOs providing short notice relief must have at least 14 days' notice of any weeks so allocated to them.
 3. Short notice relievers are to provide cover for absent RMOs as a result of sickness, bereavement, other short notice leave requirements, but may be used for other gaps as necessary.
 4. Notification to the SNR of whether relief is required and where the RMO will relieve must be given by 0900 hours each day Monday to Friday. If not notified the RMO will hold themselves available to relieve during the day should someone fall suddenly ill, until 1600 hours.
 5. RMOs will be supplied with cell phone and if called after 0900 hours will have 2 hours to report to duty.
 6. If required for a night shift, the RMO must be notified no later than 1400 hours.
 7. If, having performed a night duty, the RMO is not contacted prior to 0900 hours to confirm they are not required the following night, the RMO will assume they are working the next night and prepare accordingly.
 8. Having completed night duty(s) the RMOs shall be provided with as many sleep days off as consecutive nights worked up to a maximum of 3 days off.
 9. Short notice relievers cannot be asked to commence more than one period of duty in any 24-hour period.
 10. Short notice relievers cannot be asked to work more than 2 long days (i.e., Periods of duty in excess of ten hours excluding night duties) in any seven-day period. Except that if the total number of hours does not exceed 72 in any seven-day period, a third long day may be requested, however the third long day may not be in a consecutive 24 period with any other long day or night duty. This exception is to cater for the eventuality where the RMO has not been required to work at all some day(s) during their 7-day period on SNR.
 11. No RMO can perform more than 7 days on short notice relief in any one period and this seven-day period shall commence on a Saturday or Monday. Periods of SNR shall be rostered no more frequently than once in six weeks if from a relief pool 1(a) above and no more frequently than once a quarter if from a pool as per clause 1(b) above.
 12. If a short notice reliever is not notified by 1400 hours of relief required on a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, they shall not be required at all that day.
 13. Salary: For the period the employee provides short notice relief, they shall be paid as a planned leave reliever.
 14. Priority for cover provided by short notice relievers shall be as follows:
 - Night cover
 - Acute take and long days
- 1.3.3 Report for duty

In the circumstances where the DHB chooses to include this component into the relief schedules and rosters, the system outlined below is to be adopted.

1. Report for duty leave relievers are allocated in one of two ways.
 - (a) *Relief Pool* – Report for duty leave relievers are added to the relief pool and each member of the relief pool is allocated to report for duty relief for periods of time.
 - (b) *On a Run* - Each of the RMOs on a run or group of runs each takes a turn at report for duty relief. During this period the RMO is identified as the report for duty reliever and the provisions relating to report for duty relief apply to them. An additional reliever must be supplied to the relief pool to provide cover for the RMO on report for duty relief.
2. Where DHBs implement report for duty relievers, planned leave relievers that have not been required to cover planned leave will be allocated as additional report for duty relievers.
3. All RMOs providing report for duty relief must have at least 14 days' notice of their roster.
4. Report for duty relievers report for duty at the normal start time of the duties for the services they cover. In the first instance, they cover short notice absences and if there is no short notice absence to cover the report for duty reliever provides additional support for teams experiencing high workloads due to acute fluctuations. Unless provided 14 days' notice, report for duty relievers cannot be required to cover short-notice out-of-hours duties without their agreement.
5. Limits on hours apply to report for duty relievers.
6. Salary: Report for duty relievers shall be paid as a planned leave reliever.

Overview – Application

Relief

All RMOs employed as relievers or working on a reliever roster are to attend for duty at 0800 as unless otherwise directed in accordance with either the run description or Appendix 2.

Should the reliever not be required for the previously rostered duty, in order to meet the operational needs of the DHB, the reliever may be reassigned, on a duty by duty basis, to fulfil that operational need provided that they are qualified and skilled to do so. That duty may not be longer than the duration of the previously rostered duty. This provision applies to all relievers.

Relievers must not be used to supplement staffing levels required to meet service demand except as provided for within Appendix 2 and clause 16.1. Relievers are used for the following;

- Planned leave relief which includes night relief, annual, medical education, days in lieu, parental, jury, EREL, planned special leave and long term and elective sick leave. A planned leave reliever covers the roster of an absent RMO.
- Short Notice Relief (SNR)
- Report for Duty Relief (RFD)

Where a planned leave reliever is not allocated to cover planned leave they can be allocated to cover an unexpected absence of an RMO during ordinary hours or report for duty relief.

Priority will be given to keeping planned leave relievers on consistent specialties, wards and teams as much as possible. For example keeping a medical RMO on medical cover, or where a period of night cover is followed by annual leave cover keeping the same RMO on the same team or ward.

Roster Notice Periods

The notice requirement for publication of rosters for relievers is 14 days. Except that where relievers are working weekends the notice period for publication of weekend duties part of their roster will be 28 days. This does not apply to short notice relievers (SNR) their roster notification period is 14 days for all duties.

Payment of Relief (Clause 12.1.3 and 12.1.4)

All duties as a reliever (including short notice relief) are paid at 2 categories above or 2 categories above category for the majority of the runs they are providing relief to where relief is pooled. Where there is no majority, the run category where the RMO will be working the majority of the relief should be paid (see the examples at scenario 2).

For relievers where additional two steps on the salary scale place the reliever above the top of the House Officer scale an additional allowance as follows is paid;

- \$5,300 (Year 3 category A or Year 4 category B)
- \$10,300 (Year 4 category A)

Where relief is embedded there is no additional remuneration paid. The definition of embedded relief is where a relieving RMO is included into a service's rostering pattern to allow relief and has a work / on-call pattern that is indistinguishable from other RMOs in that service.

Guidelines for the use of RFD and SNR (Appendix 2):

Allocation of RFD is the responsibility of the service on the day. The service will decide where the RMO should cover and they should be made aware of who is on RFD on any given day in advance.

In the event where relievers are not covering RMO leave it is recommended the following is applied:

- Only 1 RMO assigned to RFD per week day to a maximum of 2 days per week per service
- RFD should be shared equally amongst the relievers
- All other available relievers should be assigned to SNR
- No more than 2 relievers assigned to SNR on any given day per service. Leave should be offered if excess relievers are unallocated.

RFD can be used to cover sick calls or short notice leave. If there are no absences, they provide additional support in the service for areas experiencing high workloads. The following are guidelines;

- Advise the RMO they are covering a sick call, where they should report and whom they are covering
- Contact the service and let them know that the person on RFD is being used to cover a sick call or short notice leave call
- Limits on hours provisions still apply and should not breach excess hours
- RFD can-not be required to work a Long Day where this is not part of their relief roster. Where a RFD has agreed to cover a Long Day due to a short notice absence the Long Day must be one continuous shift in the service. It cannot be split shifts across 2 services or teams. There is no additional remuneration where the RFD elects to work the Long Day because this is already included in the hours set out in the run category calculation.
- RFD report for duty at the normal start time for the service they cover
- They cover SNR absences and if no absences, they provide additional support in the service for areas experiencing high workloads
- The RMO Support Unit informs the service in advance who will be on RFD. On the day allocation of duties for RFD will be the responsibility of the service.

SNR are allocated in one of two ways, either from the relief pool or on a run;

1. Relief pool – added to the relief pool and each reliever is allocated to SNR for periods of time
2. On a run – RMOs on a run or group of runs each takes a turn at SNR. An additional reliever must be supplied to the relief pool to provide cover for the RMO on SNR (much as night relievers do)

SNR is to cover for absent RMOs as a result of sickness, bereavement and other short notice leave requirements. SNR requirements are;

- Notification of SNR must be given by 0900 Monday to Friday
- If called after 0900 will have 2 hours to report for duty
- Must hold themselves available to relieve during the day until 1600 should someone fall suddenly ill
- If required for night duty must be notified no later than 1400 hours
- Limitations on SNR;
 - No more than 7 days of SNR consecutively
 - Periods of SNR rostered no more frequently than once in 6 weeks
 - RMOs on SNR need to be notified by 1400 of relief required on Saturday, Sunday or public holiday
 - No more than 2 long days in any 7 day period

SNEF Project Outcomes – Senior Registrar Leave

Background

During STONZ and DHB bargaining in November 2020, access to leave and leave cover for Senior Registrars was identified as a priority area requiring further review. It was noted that Senior Registrars are often required to swap their on call /after-hours shifts in order to take leave as it is difficult to provide a reliever due to the level and nature of their work.

A project was established to understand how leave is accessed and covered for RMOs and to develop recommendations to support a consistent and transparent approach enabling access to, and management of leave for this group.

As an outcome from this project a guide for Registrars who take on the roster writing and leave management role was developed. This included updates to the RMO roster and relief review and improvement framework to capture some of the challenges for services without relief roles and to include best practice guidelines and relief models to mitigate some of these challenges.

Purpose of the Roster Writing and Leave Management Guide for Registrars

The guide has been developed to ensure Registrars in the roster writing and leave management role have access to the required resources and that there are appropriate processes in place to support and maximise leave access. The guide may also be useful for induction of new RMO unit staff or other staff who take on the roster writing and leave management role within the service.

The guide and updated RMO roster and relief review and improvement framework were released nationally on 19 July 2022. This included recommendations around next steps for Districts.

Linked Clauses

- The clauses that form part of the Roster Writing and Leave Management Guide for Registrars are;
- Clause 4 Hours of work and Rostering
- Clause 7 Medical Education
- Clause 8 Conference Leave
- Clause 9 Employment relations education leave and union leave
- Clause 16 and Appendix 2 Relief Management
- Clause 17 Limits on hours
- Clause 21 Cover for leave
- Clause 25 Annual leave and Appendix 3 Best Practice Leave Allocation Guidelines
- Clause 26 Sick leave
- Clause 27 Bereavement / Tangihanga leave

The guide is available under the “*Resources for Registrars Writing Rosters and Managing Leave*” section of the National Manual.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What can I expect when I am a reliever and what are the different types of relief?
 - All RMOs, employed as relievers or working on a reliever roster, are to attend for duty at 0800 as unless otherwise directed in accordance with either the run description or Appendix 2. Should the reliever not be required for the previously rostered duty, in order to meet the operational needs of the employer, the reliever may be reassigned, on a duty by duty basis, to fulfil that operational need provided that they are qualified and skilled to do so. That duty may not be longer than the duration of the previously rostered duty.
 - The notice provisions for relievers not working weekends is 14 days. Where a reliever is working weekends the notice provision is 28 days. We would recommend that as part of the orientation for RMOs this point is emphasised i.e. they should not expect leave to be approved on short notice when they are working weekends.
 - The requisite notice provision for Short Notice Relievers is 14 days.
 - Relievers cover those RMO's who are on nights, sleep days or RDOs.
 - Short Notice Relief (SNR) shifts are allocated to relievers with no specific duty. These relievers provide cover for absent RMOs as a result of sickness, bereavement, other short notice leave requirements, but may be used for other gaps as necessary. SNR's will be notified by 9 am if required to work a long day or by 2pm if required to work a night duty.
 - Planned leave relievers covers those RMO's who are on all types of leave listed in clause 1.3.1. This can include night relief, annual, medical education, days in lieu, parental, jury, EREL, planned special leave and long term and elective sick leave.
 - Report for duty relievers (RFD) report for duty at the normal start time of the duties for the services they cover. In the first instance, they cover short notice absences and if there is no short notice absence to cover the report for duty reliever provides additional support for teams experiencing high workloads due to acute fluctuations.

2. What can I expect from a roster if I work Short Notice Relief (SNR)?
 - You will receive your published roster 14 days prior to the roster commencement date and it will show 'SNR' as a shift.
 - No reliever can perform more than 7 days on short notice relief in any one period and this seven-day period shall commence on a Saturday or Monday.
 - Periods of SNR shall be rostered no more frequently than once in six weeks if from a relief pool (as per 1(a) of Appendix 2 in the STONZ MECA) and no more frequently than once a quarter if from a pool as per clause 1(b) of Appendix 2 in the STONZ MECA).

3. Can I be asked to work a Long Day when I am on Report for Duty Relief (RFD)?
 - RFD can-not be required to work a Long Day where this is not part of their relief roster i.e. was not detailed on your relief roster when it was published. Generally it is expected that where there is SNR available they will cover the Long Day where this has occurred as a result of a short notice absence. In the instance where SNR is not available and you have agreed to cover a Long Day this must be one continuous shift in the service. It cannot be split shifts across 2 services or teams. There is no additional remuneration where the RFD elects to work the Long Day because this is already included in the hours set out in the run category calculation.

Scenarios

Scenario 1 – Embedded Relief

Embedded Relief is defined in the STONZ MECA at clause 2 as being where a relieving RMO is included into a service’s rostering pattern to allow relief and has a work / on-call pattern that is indistinguishable from other RMOs in that service.

This could be where RMOs are working a complete roster (no additional support required to staff the baseline roster) and cover RDOs and sleep days within the team without the need for a reliever. Where relief has been embedded as part of the roster the full roster is published in accordance with clause 4.3 and is evenly shared across the RMOs contributing to that roster.

An example of this is;

- There are 10 RMOs on the roster and there is workload for 8 RMOs. At any given time there can be up to 2 RMOs off work without the need for designated relievers to replace them.
- No additional remuneration is paid where relief is embedded.

Scenario 2 – Reliever Salaries

All duties as a reliever (including short notice relief) are paid at 2 categories above or 2 categories above category for the majority of the runs they are providing relief to where relief is pooled.

Example 1 – Pooled Relief where there is a majority

Run 1 is a C category run, Run 2 is a D category run, Run 3 is a D category run, Run 4 is a C category run and Run 5 is a D category run.

- The Reliever is paid at a B category run which is 2 categories above the category for the majority of runs they are providing relief to.

Example 2 – Pooled Relief where there is no majority

Run 1 is a C category run, Run 2 is a C category run, Run 3 is a D category run and Run 4 is a D category run. There is no majority run category because it is an even split of 2 runs at a C run category and 2 runs at a D run category. Over the duration of the run the reliever will work the majority of the relief in the D category runs.

- The Reliever is paid at a B category run which is 2 categories above the category for the runs where they will be working the majority of the relief.

Example 2 – Reliever Salary

A Registrar reliever on Year 4 of the Non ED / ICU Rosters Urban salary scale is working as a reliever in a B category run.

- They will be paid 2 categories above the B category run as a reliever which is an A+ category
- To calculate the A+ salary you go to the Year 4 salary scale B category, you progress up one category to an A+ salary category and then 1 step sideways on the salary scale which is a Year 5 A category.
- RMO is paid an annual salary of \$162,100 prorated for the period they are rostered to relief.

Effective 9 December 2019

Cat	Hours	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
F	40-44.9	85,700	89,800	93,800	98,000	102,000	120,500	125,200	130,100	135,100	140,500
E	45-49.9	85,700	89,800	93,800	98,000	102,000	120,500	125,200	130,100	135,100	140,500
D	50-54.9	97,100	101,800	106,500	111,100	115,900	120,500	125,200	130,100	135,100	140,500
C	55-59.9	108,600	113,800	119,200	124,400	129,800	135,000	140,400	145,800	151,600	157,500
B	60-64.9	120,000	125,900	131,700	137,700	143,600	149,600	155,400	161,600	168,000	174,600
A	65+	135,200	141,900	148,600	155,300	162,100	168,800	175,600	182,500	189,800	197,300

Comparison STONZ and NZRDA MECA

The following table sets out where there are differences between the STONZ MECA and NZRDA MECA. Where there is no difference between clauses no detail has been provided in the comparison table.

	STONZ MECA Clauses	NZRDA MECA Clauses
Relievers notice	<p>Clause 16 and Appendix 2</p> <p>28 days' notice for weekend duties and 14 days' notice for all other duties.</p> <p>Short notice relief requires 14 days' notice.</p>	<p>Clause 4.3 and Schedule 2</p> <p>Relievers must get 28 days' notice of roster.</p> <p>Where Schedule 2 is used, notice period is two weeks.</p> <p>Short notice relief requires 28 days' notice.</p>
Reliever duties	<p>There is no minimum period of duties that need to be provided for reliever rosters but the 2 week notice period for week day duties and 28 day notice period for weekend duties applies.</p> <p>Ability to redeploy relievers on the day of duty within their run allocation.</p> <p>Relievers are required to report for duty at 0800 where they have not been rostered to specific duties.</p>	<p>Where Schedule 2 <u>is not</u> being used relievers must get 28 days' notice of roster with at least 3 months of duties.</p> <p>SNR are for absent RMOs as a result of sickness, bereavement and other short notice requirements.</p>
Relievers salaries	<p>Clause 12.1.3 and 12.1.4</p> <p>All duties as a reliever (including short notice relief) are paid at 2 categories above or 2 categories above category for the majority of the runs they are providing relief to where relief is pooled.</p> <p>For relievers where additional two steps on the salary scale place the reliever above the top of the House Officer scale an additional allowance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5,300 (Year 3 category A or Year 4 category B) • \$10,300 (Year 4 category A) 	<p>Clause 8.1.3 and 8.1.4</p> <p>All duties as a reliever paid at 2 categories above or 2 categories above category of the majority of RMOs on the runs on which they are employed to cover and shall not be rostered for more duties than would on average be worked by any other RMO on these runs.</p> <p>Short notice relievers paid a D category for all ordinary hours and additional duty rates for hours outside ordinary hours</p> <p>For relievers where additional two steps on the salary scale place the reliever above the top of the House Officer scale an additional allowance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5,000 (Year 3 category A or Year 4 category B) • \$10,000 (Year 4 category A)

Forms, Templates and Other Resources

The following resource forms part of clause 16.0 and Appendix 2 Relief Management. The guide is available on the website where the National Manual is hosted under the “Resources for Registrars Writing Rosters and Managing Leave” section.

Resource	Comment
Roster Writing and Leave Management – Guide for Registrars	This document has been developed to ensure Registrars in the roster writing and leave management role have access to the required resources and that there are appropriate processes in place to support and maximise leave access. While this guide has been developed for Registrars who take on the roster writing and leave management role, content may also be useful for induction of new RMO unit staff or other staff who take on the roster writing and leave management role.