



Protected Days Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1094/2025)

Abstract

This policy and procedures detail the criteria and application process for requesting days and/or shifts to be protected during the leave year. The People Services Department own this policy / guidance and are responsible for its implementation and monitoring use and impact. Any queries regarding this policy should be directed to People Resolution Centre (PRC) in the first instance.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy is required to enable police officers and police staff to understand the criteria for requesting to protect certain days and/or shifts to facilitate a personal need or commitment. It provides a fair and consistent approach for all eligible individuals to request to protect days and/or shifts.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy covers the eligibility criteria and application process for requesting to protect days and/or shifts off and the circumstances when this may be declined for operational purposes on specific days and applies to all police officers and all police staff who work shifts.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Surrey Police and Sussex Police are committed to providing all police officers and police staff (who work shifts) the opportunity to request to 'protect' days in order to assist with planning for special occasions or significant events and reduce the likelihood of clashes with duty changes. These individuals will be entitled to protect up to four rest days (including non-working days) and also four rostered duty days in an annual leave year, subject to operational demand.

3.2 Policies and associated guidance should inform decision making which should consider organisational values, professional judgement (on the context and circumstances of each situation) and 'policing principles'. Decisions and subsequent action taken should be proportionate, legitimate and ethical as informed by the National Decision Model (NDM).

Procedure

1. Eligibility and Criteria

1.1 Police staff who work shifts and all police officers can “protect” up to four rest days (including non-working days) and up to four rostered duties for personal, important dates or commitments in any leave year from 1 April - 31 March to enable them to attend significant occasions that may arise, and which are normally known of well in advance of the date. For example: Weddings, civil partnerships, birthdays, pre-booked ticketed events, community celebrations, faith related events.

1.2 All requests to protect a day or shift will be considered by the line manager subject to the operational demands of the service.

1.3 No more than four requests for protected rest days and four requests for protected duty days will be considered per annual leave year. Rest days which fall within an annual leave period are not included in the limit as these form part of the requested annual leave and are treated as such; when booking annual leave individuals should make it clear these are within the leave period to enable this to be considered in duties planning.

1.4 There is no “carry over into the following year” facility or cancellation and rebook system.

1.5 Requests may be made up to 12 months in advance, but a minimum of 28 days' notice must be given to the line manager or supervisor when requesting a protected day or shift. Each protected day is counted as a single request, for example if asking for 2 consecutive days this is two requests.

1.6 Any request with less than 28 days' notice will be outside the scope of this policy and procedures and therefore subject to local management approval and operational demand. If such a request is subsequently granted, in the interests of fairness, this will be counted as one of the protected days / duties permitted in a year and recorded as such.

1.7 Whilst the protecting of days under this policy and procedures is subject to operational demand, it is expected that only exceptional circumstances would require the policy to be breached by managers (e.g., this could include court). Managers are encouraged to ensure this is the case in order that the integrity and spirit of this policy and procedures are maintained.

1.8 If a police officer or member of police staff is required to work on a protected day due to exceptional circumstances then the appropriate recompense for the day booked will apply according to Police Regulations police staff contractual arrangements, and Force policy.

2. Exemption Considerations

2.1 Due to operational reasons, there are a number of specific days and operations that will not allow a protected day or shift to be requested. These are significant level operations such as Operation Peel, Operation Otter and Brighton & Hove Pride in Sussex and the Epsom Derby in Surrey. The following dates are also included in this exemption remit:

- 31st October
- 5th November
- 24th, 25th and 26th December

- 31st December and 1st January; and
- Public Holidays

Either Force may also apply discretion to refuse other days due to unforeseen or planned operational reasons, for example, during periods of mutual aid or public unrest. Details will be published to the Force at the appropriate time.

3. Application for a Protected Day or Shift

3.1 The request for a protected day or shift must be made in writing to the line manager or supervisor at least 28 days in advance. The request must show the duties immediately before and immediately after the requested 'protected day' or shift.

3.2 It is expected that the line manager / supervisor will confirm their response to the police officer or police staff member within 7 calendar days.

3.3 The e-mail request and response will then need to be forwarded onto the relevant duties and resourcing team who will record the protected rest days / duties on the system.

4. Employment Data

4.1 Surrey Police and Sussex Police collect and process personal data relating to police officers and police staff to manage the employment relationship. It is important that individuals understand how that data is collected and used in order to meet the Force's data protection obligations. Further details can be located on the intranet by searching for 'Privacy Notice'.

Team: People Services Department.