NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

Overtime for Supervisors Raises Fears of Retirements

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some of them worked in the aftermath of the World Trade Center attack. Under existing labor contracts, such supervisors are compensated for extra hours of work only with time off, not money.

Fire officials said that Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen had approached Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani several weeks ago to discuss whether the city would make a special exemption for the supervisors this year. "He thought their commitment and dedication deserved special recognition," First Deputy Fire Commissioner Michael Regan said.

The plan will let 1,100 supervisors in both departments collect overtime pay, but only for any extra hours they might have worked between Sept. 11 and Nov. 10.

They will get pay for half of the extra hours and will be compensated with time off for the rest. City officials said they expected all of the overtime to be reimbursed by the federal government, which has been helping the city with costs associated with the terrorist attack.

"There may be some impacts on retirements but it is too early to know what that impact might be," said Deputy Commissioner Thomas Antenen, a spokesman for the Police Department. "But that's not the issue. The issue here is a method of rewarding the members of the department for work above and beyond."

The pace of retirement has become a critical issue for the Police Department because it is facing increasing demands on its manpower with the additional responsibilities of protecting the city from another incident of terrorism.

At the same time, the 40,000-member department has had trouble, like police agencies across the nation, in finding recruits to replace officers as they leave.

The extra pay is not expected to have as great an impact on retirements at the Fire Department. For one thing, retirements in that agency have increased by only 10 percent this year.

For another, officials said the average fire officer would earn roughly $5,400 in overtime under the new plan, whereas his police counterpart may earn twice that. (Many police supervisors worked extremely long hours as the city remained on a round-the-clock terrorist alert for weeks.)

Finally, although some fire chiefs may collect as much as $20,000 in overtime, as a group they generally retire later than police supervisors, many of whom leave soon after serving the 20 years required to receive a full pension.

In the Police Department, the ranks affected by the new plan are that of captain, deputy inspector, inspector and deputy chief. In the Fire Department, the ranks affected are battalion chief and deputy chief.

Each of the jobs earns a different salary, ranging from the base salary of $98,000 for a police captain to $120,000 for an deputy chief in the Fire Department.

One criminologist said that he did not believe the overtime would accelerate retirements in the upper ranks, because successful managers often have more incentives to stay than those who have spent 20 years in the lesser ranks.

"My feeling is that people who are of a high rank who see a future in the new administration would not leave," said Eli Silverman, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.



Angel Franco/The New York Times

In the wake of the trade center attacks, the city will reward high-ranking police and fire supervisors for long hours with overtime pay.

John Driscoll, the president of the Captains Endowment Association, the union that represents the police supervisors, said his members had earned 200 to 400 hours of overtime during the period and that the decision to pay them for some of it may actually dissuade some of them from retiring.

"You are dealing with a lot of captains who were making less than sergeants because of all the overtime," he said. "You had an executive corps that was demoralized."

In the fire ranks, the plan helped weave a rare moment of détente yesterday between the fire officers' union and Mr. Von Essen, with whom it had been fighting for months.

"We think it was the right thing to do," said Peter Gorman, the president of the union, the Uniformed Fire Officers Association. "They spent so much time over these weeks, it was almost impossible to give them that much time off."

Indeed, James F. Hanley, the commissioner of the city's Office of Labor Relations, said that in the long run, it would have been difficult for the city if it had not come up with a plan of this sort. Many supervisors normally carry over much of their compensatory time until they retire.

Some in this group, he said, would have earned so much that, when they retired, the city might have had to wait months to appoint replacements because the budget line would still be carrying a person who was no longer on the job.

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