



Member Update

2026 BWS Fatigue Rules Update

NATCA Members,

Thank you all for your patience as I worked with the agency to address the concerns I heard from you and your representatives regarding the application of the 12-hours prior to a midnight shift rule. As I talked with facility representatives and members, the issue of the staffing challenges associated with implementing the 12-hour prior to the midnight shift rule and the strain it continues to put on staffing was common at facilities that have midnight shifts. I know how short staffed you are, and I understand the strain the application of the 12-hours prior to the midnight shift puts on your schedules, flexibility, and your work life balance.

As a result, I discussed those issues with senior leadership of the ATO, who shared similar views regarding the strain on staffing and the need to allow time for facility staffing to improve. The Secretary, the new FAA Administrator, and NATCA are all committed to the hiring and training of air traffic controllers and understand that there is no quick solution, and we need time to improve our staffing.

Considering these factors, the Parties at the national level have reached a common understanding of the need to pause the implementation of the 12-hours prior to a midnight shift for the upcoming 2026 Basic Watch Schedule (BWS).

As such, we have reached a joint understanding on the fatigue and scheduling provisions for the 2026 Basic Watch Schedule (BWS).

The complete understanding is included below. Here are the key highlights:

- The **requirement of time between all shifts is 10 hours** for the 2026 BWS.
- The **12-hour rest after the midnight shift remains unchanged**
- The parties at the local level should consider using 4-10 schedules to mitigate fatigue for those working midshifts.
- The Fatigue Rules MOU overtime assignments remain unchanged
- Schedules may be clockwise or counterclockwise.

- The Parties at the national level will review the 2-2-1 schedule and processes to address fatigue associated with the schedule, and metrics for implementation for the 2027 BWS.

We will be scheduling multiple webinars for Facility Representatives and their local negotiation teams to implement these changes and prepare for the 2026 BWS and annual leave negotiations.

Thank you for your patience throughout this process, and a sincere thank you to all the FacReps for your invaluable feedback in the regional and group meetings. Your contributions have been instrumental in this process. We prioritized completing this and getting it to everyone so that our local leaders have the time, tools, and support they need to advocate for schedules that work for their facilities and those we represent.

In Solidarity,

Nick Daniels
NATCA President

The 2026 BWS Understanding Between the Parties and Amendments to the Fatigue Rules MOU:

After careful consideration and discussion regarding current facility staffing levels and concerns with meeting time between shift requirements as identified in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated July 19, 2024, the Parties at the national level have collaboratively agreed to suspend the application of the requirement for a 12-hour off-duty period prior to a midnight shift, as outlined in Sections 1.a. 4. and 1. b. 5. for use in the development of the 2026 Basic Watch Schedule (BWS) and for the application and use for the period covered by 2026 BWS. All other provisions of the MOU, including the 12-hour rest period following the midnight shift, remain unchanged and in effect.

The Parties at the local level should consider the use of a 4-10 schedule in the BWS to help mitigate the effects of working midnight shift assignments.

Additionally, the Parties have collaboratively agreed to meet and review processes to address fatigue associated with the counterclockwise rotating 2-2-1 schedule and metrics for us for use in the development of the 2027 BWS and for the application and use for the period covered by 2027 BWS.

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