



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

L. Brad Creasy  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Virginia Department of Fire Programs

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June 12, 2026

**TO:** Virginia Fire Chiefs

**FROM:** Brad Creasy, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Encouraging a 42-hour Work Week for Paid Firefighters

During the 2026 General Assembly Session, the General Assembly passed HB1333 which amended § 9.1-702 of the Code of Virginia relating to hours of work for paid firefighters. The legislation encourages employers to implement work schedules that do not require a paid firefighter's normally scheduled shifts to exceed an average of 42 hours per workweek.

As Virginia's fire training and support agency, Virginia Department of Fire Programs understands that staffing models and operational needs vary significantly among localities. Decisions regarding staffing, scheduling, and budgeting remain local decisions that must account for and address community expectations and demands, as well as addressing recruitment and retention realities, and budgetary considerations.

At the same time, the Department supports continued discussion and evaluation of staffing practices that prioritize firefighter wellness, operational readiness, and long-term sustainability within the fire service. HB1333 seeks to address those concerns, and the Department encourages departments to explore its implementation for their paid firefighters scheduling purposes.

Several states and local jurisdictions around the country have explored or implemented scheduling guidelines. For example, in 2025 Florida Governor Ron Desantis signed HB929 to reduce burnout and fatigue. The law encourages limiting standard paid firefighter shifts to 42 hours per week, acknowledging that excessive work hours can lead

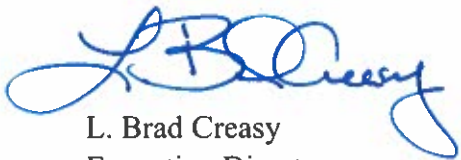
to both physical exhaustion and mental stress, potentially compromising both the safety of firefighters and the public.

Recent studies from the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program offer critical insights into paid firefighter scheduling. This data indicates that reliable, manageable work schedules could directly improve firefighters' mental and physical well-being along with other direct benefits that correlate to improved working conditions.

These discussions surrounding staffing are often tied to concerns regarding employee wellness, workforce sustainability, work-life balance, fatigue reduction, recruitment and retention. The Department agrees and remains committed to working with our partners to implement best scheduling practices, and we encourage all localities to explore all of their options.

We appreciate the leadership of the General Assembly, local governments, and members of the fire service community who continue to engage in thoughtful dialogue on this issue. The Virginia fire service has long demonstrated a willingness to adapt and innovate in order to meet the current and ever-changing demands while continuing to provide exceptional service to the public. The Department looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with stakeholders across the Commonwealth as localities evaluate what staffing and scheduling models best support their operational and community needs.

Respectfully submitted,



L. Brad Creasy  
Executive Director

CC: The Honorable Secretary Meador, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security  
The Honorable Michael Feggans, Delegate, 97<sup>th</sup> House District