



Sheriff Denita R. Ball

MILWAUKEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ADDRESSES IMMINENT STAFFING CHANGES TO AGENCY'S COURTS DIVISION

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO), effective Monday September 9, 2024, will modify Courts Division staffing to address the MCSO's overall shortage of deputies, to alleviate the excessive hours that deputy sheriffs have been compelled to work and hopefully, to stem the exodus of deputies who, worked to the point of both mental and physical exhaustion, are resigning for law enforcement jobs in other jurisdictions, and in some cases, leaving the vocation altogether. The MCSO will transfer 15 deputies to the Courts Division, which will give the division its full budgeted allotment of 90 deputies. In doing so, moving forward, we will no longer force deputies from the Airport and Patrol divisions to work on their off days or work double shifts to fill Courts vacancies.

The MCSO currently has 75 deputies assigned to the Courts Division of the 90 that are budgeted. This number is not enough to fill all regular positions needed on a daily basis nor is it enough to account for sick days, vacations, FMLA, and the division's staffing is regularly augmented to achieve minimum staffing by deputies on forced overtime from the Patrol and Airport Divisions, with deputies working either continuous double shifts (16 hours) or on their off days to fill vacancies.

This means the MCSO will not have as many deputies working in the Courts Division on certain days as we have had in the past. This change was born of necessity. The MCSO simply does not have enough deputies to maintain the agency's current staffing matrix and must provide an appropriate work/life balance for its members to retain the staffing we have while maintaining safety and security in the courts and throughout the agency. Expecting deputies to work with no off days, and to work 16-hour shifts – in many instances, several days in a row, is untenable and unreasonable, as we are losing deputies at an unprecedented rate.

In an effort to work with the Chief Judge, the MCSO will, for now, attempt to maintain the status quo by allowing members to volunteer for overtime shifts. But if enough members do not volunteer to fill shifts, MCSO will make a daily assessment on eliminating specific positions in the downtown Courthouse Complex.

We recognize that this situation is frustrating to many – to the MCSO, to the First Judicial District, to criminal defendants, attorneys, loved ones and other patrons of the courts. But we believe it's most frustrating to the deputy sheriffs who are compelled to work more hours than reasonable and to the residents and workers of and visitors to Milwaukee County, who also count on our deputies to patrol 150-plus miles of freeway, 156 Milwaukee County parks, and the campus of Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport. Further, this frustration will continue until the MCSO is able to fill existing deputy vacancies, slow or end the rate of attrition, and secure funding for additional FTE positions to properly staff all Police Services Bureau divisions (Courts, Patrol, and Airport), with a relief factor that accounts for vacations, illnesses, and other absences.

MCSO is committed to providing the safest environment possible within the Courts Division with the deputies assigned to this division and volunteers for overtime in that division.

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"WE ARE HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD – AND WE OUGHT TO BE PROUD."

For more information about the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, visit our website at MKESheriff.org and our Facebook page at Facebook.com/MilwaukeeCountySheriff.