

Duty Hours

The ACGME requires all residency programs to adhere to common duty hour standards. The standards include the following provisions:

- An 80-hour weekly limit, averaged over four weeks.
- An adequate rest period, which should consist of 10 hours of rest between duty periods.
- A 24-hour limit on continuous duty, with up to six added hours for continuity of care and education.
- One day in seven free from patient care and educational obligations, averaged over four weeks.
- Residents must be scheduled for a minimum of one day free of duty every week (when averaged over four weeks). At-home call cannot be assigned on these free days.

Duty periods of PGY-1 residents must not exceed 16 hours in duration. Duty periods of PGY-2 residents and above may be scheduled to a maximum of 24 hours of continuous duty in the hospital.

Programs must encourage residents to use alertness management strategies in the context of patient care responsibilities. Strategic napping, especially after 16 hours of continuous duty and between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., is strongly suggested.

It is essential for patient safety and resident education that effective transitions in care occur. Residents may be allowed to remain on-site in order to accomplish these tasks; however, this period of time must be no longer than an additional four hours.

Residents must not be assigned additional clinical responsibilities after 24 hours of continuous in-house duty. In unusual circumstances, residents, on their own initiative, may remain beyond their scheduled period of duty to continue to provide care to a single patient. Justifications for such extensions of duty are limited to reasons of required continuity for a severely ill or unstable patient, academic importance of the events transpiring, or humanistic attention to the needs of a patient or family.

a) Under those circumstances, the resident must:

- (i) appropriately hand over the care of all other patients to the team responsible for their continuing care; and,
- (ii) document the reasons for remaining to care for the patient in question and submit that documentation in every circumstance to the program director.

(b) The program director must review each submission of additional service, and track both individual resident and program-wide episodes of additional duty.

Minimum Time Off between Scheduled Duty Periods

PGY-1 residents should have 10 hours, and must have eight hours, free of duty between scheduled duty periods.

Intermediate-level residents [as defined by the Review Committee] should have 10 hours free of duty, and must have eight hours between scheduled duty periods. They must have at least 14 hours free of duty after 24 hours of in-house duty.

Residents in the final years of education [as defined by the Review Committee] must be prepared to enter the unsupervised practice of medicine and care for patients over irregular or extended periods.