

10-hour shift schedules

[Home](#)

[Free Assessment](#) [Schedule Examples](#)

[10-Hour Shifts](#) [Design Assistance](#)

[Coverage](#) [Shift Length](#)

[Fixed vs. Rotating Shifts](#) [Staffing](#)

[Calculator](#)



Shift Schedule Design

55 Mitchell Blvd., Ste. 2

San Rafael, CA 94903

(415) 717-3754

bruce@shift-schedule-design.com

10-hour shifts are an extremely popular shift length. After all, they provide up to 55 more days off per year than 8-hour shifts, and the workdays are a lot more tolerable than 12-hour shifts.

BUT . . . they are only appropriate in certain situations.

10-hour shifts are a good alternative to 8-hour shifts when there are only one or two shifts a day. Many office jobs, for example, can be handled with a compressed work week schedule consisting of four 10-hour shifts a week. However, if the organization must maintain a minimum level of coverage throughout the week, employees won't be able to take every Friday off. Instead, the extra day off may have to rotate to ensure adequate coverage each day of the week.

10-hour shifts are also well-suited for organizations that operate 24/7 and have a variable workload. Good examples are police and communication centers that need more employees on duty during high activity periods such as the evening rush hours or from midnight to 2:00 or 3:00 a.m.

When you squeeze three 10-hour shifts into a 24-hour period, the shifts will overlap one another for 6 hours (three 10-hour shifts per day = 30 hours). If you align the overlapping shifts with the busy periods, you will increase the coverage when the workload is heaviest. This will improve response times, eliminate dropped calls, and boost the morale of the people who have to work during these busy periods.

10-hour shifts are not a good choice if your workload stays constant throughout the day. Why would you want double coverage for 6 hours every day if your workload is always the same? And why would you want to increase the number of employees needed?

If your sole reason for considering 10-hour shifts is to get days off and more weekends off, we suggest you consider 12-hour shifts. They will provide far more days and weekends off and they will avoid the six major limitations of 10-hour schedules, which are described below:

1. More Personnel. 10-hour shift schedules usually require more employees than 8 or 12-hour schedules because they are based on 30-hour days. If you try to replace your 8-hour shifts with 10-hour shifts without making any other changes, you will need 25% more people to maintain the same coverage.

2. More Facilities/Equipment. When the 10-hour shifts overlap, you will have employees from both shifts working at the same time. You'll need twice as much space and equipment to accommodate the added personnel.

3. Built-In Overtime. If you have less than 21 employees, your 10-hour shift schedule will probably have some overtime built into it to maintain the desired coverage.

4. Unusual Shift Start Times. When you align the overlapping shifts with the peak workload periods, this may result in some unusual shift start and end times, for example a day shift that starts at 11 a.m. Organizations that set the shift start times to satisfy employee preferences (rather than to match the workload) will end up with double coverage during their slow periods and normal coverage during the busy periods. This defeats the whole purpose for adopting 10-hour shifts.

5. Crewless Schedules. Unlike 8 and 12-hour shift schedules, most 10-hour schedules don't have any crews -- each employee has their own schedule. With fixed shifts, you could call each shift a squad, but not all squad members will be working on the same days. With rotating shifts, you could retain your existing squads, but the team members may be working different days or even different shifts.

6. Supervisory Problems. Since there are no crews, how do you handle supervision? Supervisors could end up working different days or shifts than their subordinates. If the supervisors also want 10-hour shifts, it will take 5 people (or multiples of 5) with rotating shifts and 6 people (or multiples of 6) with fixed shifts to have one supervisor available at all times .

Because of these limitations, the design of an effective 10-hour shift schedule may not be something you can do on your own. Figuring out how to make the schedule work or how to get around the six limitations is not simple. Copying a schedule used by another police department or dispatch group is probably not going to make efficient use of your personnel or match your workload.

If you would like more information about 10-hour shift schedules, we suggest you check out the following articles written by Bruce Oliver:

- [*Emergency Number Professional Magazine, May 2005*](#)
- [*Law & Order, July 2005*](#)
- [*Public Safety Communications/APCO Bulletin, April 2006*](#)

If you would like our assistance in designing a 10-hour shift schedule, please click on the link below. When you order a 10-hour schedule, you will receive an Excel spreadsheet showing the on-off work pattern (click [here](#) for an example) and the recommended start and end times for each shift. You will also get a follow-up phone call to explain the results and answer any questions you might have about the schedule. Prices for most 10-hour schedules range from \$200 to \$400, depending on how complicated your requirements are. We accept all major credit cards or business/personal checks.

[Request a quote](#)

[Printable Page \(PDF\)](#)