Frequently Asked Questions

We invite you to check out all the available options for managing your company's scheduling and workforce management needs. eSchedule is very powerful and flexible. We understand you have questions; the biggest one being: "Is eSchedule a good fit for us?"

Take a look at these commonly asked questions to help determine if we can help your agency save time and money.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Do I have to setup or install anything?

No. There is nothing to install. eSchedule is completely web-based. There's no need to install software, upgrade software or manage a server.

If we're interested in getting started, what's the process?

After we provide you with a brief tour and pricing, we'll ask for your approval to move forward. From there, we simply need to understand your shift template and any rules that affect the time clock if you're choosing to use that feature. We'll also need a copy of your membership roster so that we can setup accounts for everyone.

Do you have an "app"?

While we do not have an "app", eSchedule is mobile friendly (responsive). Responsive web design (RWD) is an approach to web design that makes web pages render well on a variety of devices. It works on desktop, tablet and mobile devices. The mobile version offers the most frequently used features. A link to the "full" version is always available in the footer. If you're using a tablet or iPad, the full web version will appear.

How many members can access the software?

Our pricing is based on the number of active members in your organization as well as the features you wish to activate. You tell us how many people need to have access and we'll only charge you for what you use. Once you reach your max # users, simply contact us to increase your plan to allow for more users.

Why should we choose eSchedule over other software?

1. Through our dynamic configuration architecture and programming customizations, we will tailor the software to meet your unique needs. We have over 180 different configuration options resulting in thousands of combinations.
2. Customer service is key. You can reach us by phone or e-mail.
3. Everything in one place. No need to have separate systems for scheduling, time clock, certifications, training, forms, etc.
4. Our software is designed specifically for public service agencies.
5. Our time clock is hands down the most powerful in the industry. We can handle any unique calculations you might have.
6. Our pricing is very competitive and reasonable.
7. There is no long-term contract or commitment.

How long have you been in business?

Since 2004.

How many customers do you have?

Hundreds, located all over the United States and a few in Canada.

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organize your agency.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Can I setup different administration levels for my staff?

Yes. Different options include:

- Administrator
- Scheduler
- Department Administrator
- Event Administrator
- Swap/Trade Approver
- Shift Bid/Request Approver
- Document Administrator
- CME Administrator (Training Officer)
- Time Clock Administrator
- View Only
- & more...

How much does eSchedule cost?

The cost will depend on the number of members in your department as well as the specific modules you wish to have activated. The per-month price starts at $75/month invoiced annually at $900. Contact us with your agency size and a list of modules you're interested in and we'll be happy to provide you with a custom quote.

Is your software secure? What about downtime?

eSchedule is safe, secure and downtime is next to never (in fact, we have 99.9%+ uptime). Contact us for a copy of our detailed security & information technology document.

Do you have a 'trouble ticket' component?

You can utilize our "Forms Manager" to create a custom trouble ticket form that can be used for issue reporting or vehicle maintenance problems, for example.

Do you have a shift "giveaway" feature?

Yes. Your member can "post" their shift for someone to work for them. An e-mail will be sent to all cleared members asking them to bid on the available shift.

What's with the message that appears at the top of the "dashboard"?

As an admin, you can place any message(s) you want to appear at the top of the dashboard. This will be viewed by anyone who logs in. You can even include links to other sites if you'd like.

What reports do you offer?

We have many different reports available for you to access. Reports are also "filterable" and most are "exportable" to Excel.

Examples of reports include:

- Open Shift
- Overtime Projection
- Event Attendees
- Time Card / Timekeeping / Payroll
- Availability Report
- Service Report by Position
- Service Report by Month
- Member List / Database
- Missed Punch & Exception Reporting (Time Clock)
- Missed Shifts
- Absentee & Late Report
- PTO Report
- ….& more…

Does eSchedule sync with other calendars or software?

Members have the option to export their upcoming shifts/schedule to the iCal format which is the most commonly accepted calendar format. They can then sync the iCal file with Outlook, Google Calendar, etc.

What happens if a member can't remember their password?

A standard 'forgot your password' mechanism is in place which will e-mail the member their password. Additionally, an administrator can reset any password.

What do my members see when they login?

If your members have any certifications that are nearing expiration, they will receive an alert each time they login. Also, if they have any unread messages, it will notify them as such. After that, your member will see the main 'dashboard' which is a summary of upcoming shifts, messages, shift bids/swaps, PTO information and upcoming events.

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SCHEDULING QUESTIONS

Can you handle rotations or recurring shift patterns?

You bet. Any rotation(s) you might have can be programmed into our software. Examples include; weekly, 24/48, 48/96, Kelly, Dupont, etc.

Can I customize the schedule?

Yes. We'll set you up with a custom schedule 'template' that is comprised of whatever units/shifts/times/positions you want. Our software is designed specifically to meet the needs of public service agencies. Examples include:

- Station 1, Station 2
- West Station, East Station
- Night Shift, Day Shift
- Medic, Driver, EMT, BLS, ALS, FF, Trainee, Other, Rider/Observer, Paramedic, Pump Operator, Interior Firefighter

These are just examples. We will make sure your schedule functions how you'd like it.

Can you filter the schedule? How can I view it?

Yes. We can setup custom filters that allow you to view the schedule by various criteria. You can also see the schedule using hourly, daily, weekly or monthly views.

Can any of my members work any shift on the schedule?

No. They will only be able to sign-up to work for shift types in which they're cleared for. In the user profile, you control which "positions" they are cleared for. This determines the shifts they're eligible to work.

What if I want a BLS/EMT to work an ALS/ Paramedic shift because we're short-staffed?

This depends on how you configure your 'positions' and shifts within the software. For example, if you setup your BLS EMTs to only be cleared as such (e.g. they're not ALS), then they will not be able to "pick up" or "bid" on an ALS/ paramedic shift. Administrators can always override this and place anyone into any shift they wish.

Can I remove someone from a single instance of a recurring/rotating shift?

Yes.

Can I remove someone from all instances of a recurring/rotating shift?

Yes.

Can I close out shifts on my schedule template so they don't appear on the schedule?

Yes, you can. Members can't sign-up or bid for any shift(s) that you close out.

Will the schedule allow someone to be scheduled in two places?

No. Any given member/employee can only be in one place on the schedule at any given time.

I have a member who is working a regular shift but is also attending an event or meeting at our agency at that time. Will they be paid twice?

Possibly. You need to be sure to not place time on that employee's time card for the meeting/event if they're already working and punched in.

When I'm looking at the schedule, what do the icons next to the people's names mean?

We can customize this to suit your needs. For example, many agencies will use an "(A)" to indicate "ALS" or "(B)" to show "BLS", etc. We can also display trainer status as well as recurring shifts on the schedule.

How do you account for pay periods or days of the week?

Pay periods can be set-up to start/end at any day or time. ie. Sunday at 0000; Monday at 0600, etc. -weekly, bi-weekly, semi-monthly, monthly, 28-day and more. We'll make it suit your needs.

What are the rules around submitting availability?

Availability rules can be setup how you wish. For example, some agencies require availability to be submitted by the "Xth" day of each month. If you tell us when that is, we will restrict access to it after that same day each month (just an example) or, leave it open to submit at any time.

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SCHEDULING QUESTIONS

What is the Auto Scheduler feature?

Our 'auto scheduler' feature uses the schedule template and your employees' submitted availability and automatically creates a recommended schedule for you. It uses number of hours per week/pay period as well as hire date to create a proposed ideal schedule. As a schedule administrator, you will have the opportunity to approve/deny any portion of the suggested schedule prior to publishing it.

Can I split up a shift?

Yes. Our software is smart enough to allow you to place a member in a shift but only for a portion of it. For example, on a 0700-1700 shift, if you add John Doe from 0700-1200, eSchedule will automatically create an open shift for the balance (1200-1700).

How can my members pick-up an open shift?

We offer three (3) different options for you to choose from:

1. You can allow any member to pick up any open shift (that they're qualified to work) at any time without approval needed. We call this DIRECT SIGN-ON.
2. You can allow your members to 'bid' on a shift which then requires review by a schedule administrator prior to placing them on the schedule.
3. Or, we can setup a 'hybrid' solution. This allows employees under a certain number of hours (that you pick) to automatically pick up an open shift. If they've exceeded the max # hours for the week or pay period, then it requires review by an administrator.

I'm looking at the schedule including those who are available to work. What's the difference between the names in gray vs. black?

Members who's names are in gray are already working at some point during that day. If their name is black, they're available but not currently working that day.

Can my members request to "swap" a shift?

Yes. Your members can swap or "trade" a shift with another member. E-mail alerts are sent and the other member can approve or deny the request. If your agency is setup to require administrative approval for shift changes, the scheduling admin will receive an e-mail notifying them of the request, asking for their approval.

When a member picks up or bids on a shift, can they include their comments?

Yes, there is a "comments" field they can use to send a note to the scheduler along with their request.

Does eSchedule store social security numbers or pay rate information?

No, we do not. Our time clock module only tracks your employees' name, contact information (demographics), hours worked (date, time, etc.) as well as the pay codes associated with that time.

How can my members submit their availability?

The availability submission screen is very simple yet powerful. Your members will view a calendar and they can click on the various dates and shifts they're available to work. They can even enter a custom time if they're only available for a portion of a shift.

What is the Events Calendar?

The Events Calendar is an easy-to-use, flexible tool to allow for the creation of both internal and external events. If you have an upcoming staff meeting or training event, place it on the calendar. Your employees can then login and sign-up to attend the event. After it's over, you can do a simple time card export which gives credit to those members who attended the event (this will carry through to payroll). You can also place the calendar on your public-facing website (optional) and allow registrations for events from the general public (ie. CPR classes). You can even send event data to the training module and/or an employees time card.

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TIME CLOCK QUESTIONS

How do you calculate time for the time cards?
Based on your company policy. Our time clock is the most powerful in the industry. We can handle any time calculations your agency may have. We'll make sure your time card process is seamless, easy and accurate.

Our agency's time calculation is complicated. Can you handle it?
Without a doubt. We'll ensure your time clock and time card/payroll export is spot on. This includes custom pay codes and calculations for things like:

- PTO / Vacation
- Sick Time
- Personal
- Unpaid
- Training
- Admin
- Operations
- Holidays
- Comp Time
- …& more.

What payroll processors do you work with?
Our time clock module will export time card data in any format you might need. If your payroll provider has a custom or specific need, please let us know. Chances are we can make it work.

How do my members punch in/out?
The time clock is web-based. After your member logs in, they simply click the CLOCK IN button. They can enter a comment along with their 'punch'. We will customize the time clock's logic to suit your needs. For example, if you want to allow your members the ability to punch in 15 minutes early, that's no problem. It's all up to you.

Can members punch in/out from anywhere?
That depends. Most of our customers choose to restrict access to the time clock. We can set it up to allow punches from anywhere or just from the computer(s) you specify. Administrators can manage punches manually from anywhere.

How do I restrict access to the time clock?
You can restrict where the member clocks in from using our Administrator's Tool or, simply contact support for assistance. You can setup your time clock to only allow access based on an IP address, a computer name or a "MAC" address.

What happens if someone is late or absent?
This will create an 'exception' in the system. Administrators can monitor the Exception Report from anywhere at anytime. Exceptions include punch in early/late, punch out early/late, not scheduled, etc. As the administrator, you will need to review and approve/edit/deny any exceptions prior to closing out the pay cycle.

Does eSchedule take care of tracking sick and personal time?
Yes.

Can someone request paid time off (PTO) if their bank of hours is empty?
We can allow for "negative PTO" requests or not. Let us know which option you prefer.

What is labor distribution?
Want to know how much labor is expended at each station? That's labor distribution in a nutshell. Labor distribution allows you to categorize your employees' hours so you can pay them from different pay codes, centers, or departments.

How does time card data get exported to my payroll provider?
The power of the time card export process is extreme! It's so quick and simple. After you've verified that all your employees' time cards are correct, all it takes is the click of button. The data is compiled and a file is created that you can send to your payroll provider.

What's the overtime projection report?
One of the ways we'll help you save money is by keeping overtime to a minimum. By using the overtime projection report, you'll have a sense for the amount of overtime upcoming and can make staffing changes accordingly.

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TIME CLOCK QUESTIONS

How can I enter time for a large group of employees for a meeting or training?

There are a couple different ways to handle this. By using our 'multi-punch' tool, you can punch in/out a large number of employees all with a single click. Or, you can use the Event Calendar feature to allow your members to sign-up for an event (staff meeting, training, etc.). Once the event is over, simply verify their attendance and export the time to their time card. Easy!

Can eSchedule keep track of "comp" time?

Yes. This allows your employees to work shifts that can be tracked and rewarded with comp time, to be redeemed later. This is a custom setup that will be built around your company's specific policies (holidays, overtime, paying at 1.5 time, etc.).

TRAINING & CME TRACKING QUESTIONS

How does the certification tracking work?

You can enter as many certification "types" as you need (CPR, ACLS, PALS, FF1, EVOC/CEVO, etc.). Once you've entered all of them, you can enter expiration dates for each of your members. They will be alerted when their certification is nearing expiration.

Can I upload scans of certification cards/certificates?

Yes. Feel free to scan in copies of your members' certifications and upload them to eSchedule. We accept any common file format for images. If you upload JPG's, we can even create one file that your members can use to view all their cards on one page!

What happens when someone logs in and a required certification has lapsed?

The member can login but they will be in a 'read only' mode. They won't be able to clock in or pick up shifts, as an example. This ensures you don't send someone on a call with an expired certification resulting in a potential fine.

What is the CME module?

The CME module allows your training department to easily track progress toward recertification. We will customize this area to meet the needs of your state or certification process. For example, EMT-B providers in New York need 24 hours of core training over 3 years. The CME module allows you to enter classes that qualify for the necessary training. Your members will always have access to view their status toward recertification.

What's the difference between the Certification & CME modules?

The certification module allows you to enter any number or type of certifications your members may need. The CME module is tailored specifically to your state's continuing medical education requirements and is used to track progress toward a specific set of classes and # of hours for recertification.

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AGENCY MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION QUESTIONS

Can I send out messages to all my members?
Of course. Our messaging feature is very powerful. You can send an internal message (within the software), an e-mail blast, text messages or a message to your member's digital pagers. You can even attach files and see when someone read your message!

How does group messaging work?
We automatically create message groups based on your agency's unique setup. You can also create unlimited custom "groups" of people to message on your own. Name the groups however you'd like. The power is in your hands.

Does eSchedule send automatic e-mail notifications?
Yes. There are a number of automatic e-mail notifications that get sent to users and/or administrators. This includes shift pick-up requests, PTO requests, shift approvals, etc. We also send out an automatic weekly e-mail to all your members that shows their schedule, upcoming open shifts for the week and expiring certifications. The system alerts (emails, texts) come from admin@emseschedule.com. The "From" name would be your agency/department name.

Can my employees send out messages to everyone?
That's up to you. We can set it up so only administrators can send out mass messages. Or, we can allow your members to also use this feature.

Can I attach more than one file to a group e-mail message?
Yes.

Can members edit their own profile information?
Your members will be able to edit some, but not all of their data. They can change their contact information, messaging preferences and password. All other data is managed by administrators.

What's the vehicle maintenance module?
You can track your fleets' mileage, costs and budgets, routine and unscheduled maintenance issues and more!

How does the document library work?
Think of the document library as a web-based storage drive. You can create an unlimited number of folders and upload files to each of them. All your members can access these files at any time. This great for reference materials such as SOG's, SOP's, protocols, policies or any other file you may wish to share..).

Can I create custom fields in the member profiles?
Yes. They can be a date, list, number or open text. You can make these fields required or not. Some examples for which you might use this would be:

- Creating custom member types (life member, auxiliary)
- Adding "clearance" dates
- Adding dates when a member is approved by the Board

What would I use the assigned equipment module for?
This is great for tracking any equipment or items you issue to your members. Jackets, pagers, keys, radios, etc. You can see a report by each member that shows all the items they possess.

Does eSchedule handle tracking of inventory?
The software is not meant to track true inventory for things like medical supplies. It will, however, work for keeping tabs on equipment that you issue to your members.

What is Forms Manager?
This great feature lets you take nearly any paper form you may have and place it online. We will create a custom form for your agency based on what you currently use. This is great for rig/vehicle/truck checks, gear checks, drug/CS checks, uniform requests and more. The forms are specific to your agency and are built from scratch.

What is the Reward Points Module?
The Reward Points Module allows you to reward your members with points for time spent with your organization. Members can login, view and track their points balance as well as request to redeem points.