

YUMA FIRE DEPARTMENT SIMPLIFIES COMPLEX SCHEDULING WITH A REPEATABLE PROCESS

“If you had told me five or six years ago that it would take only two hours to build schedules for the month, I wouldn’t have believed you.”

- Kris Leon

Captain, Yuma Fire Department



AT A GLANCE

Yuma Fire Department adopted Slate—ImageTrend’s scheduling solution for EMS and fire departments—to streamline a process managed through Word, spreadsheets and phone calls. The department now builds monthly schedules in about two hours and applies vacancy and overtime rules through one repeatable process.

THE CHALLENGE

Yuma Fire Department serves its southern Arizona community from seven stations and responds to nearly 20,000 calls annually. Approximately 140 field personnel staff seven engine companies, one ladder company, five full-time ambulances and a seasonal ambulance.

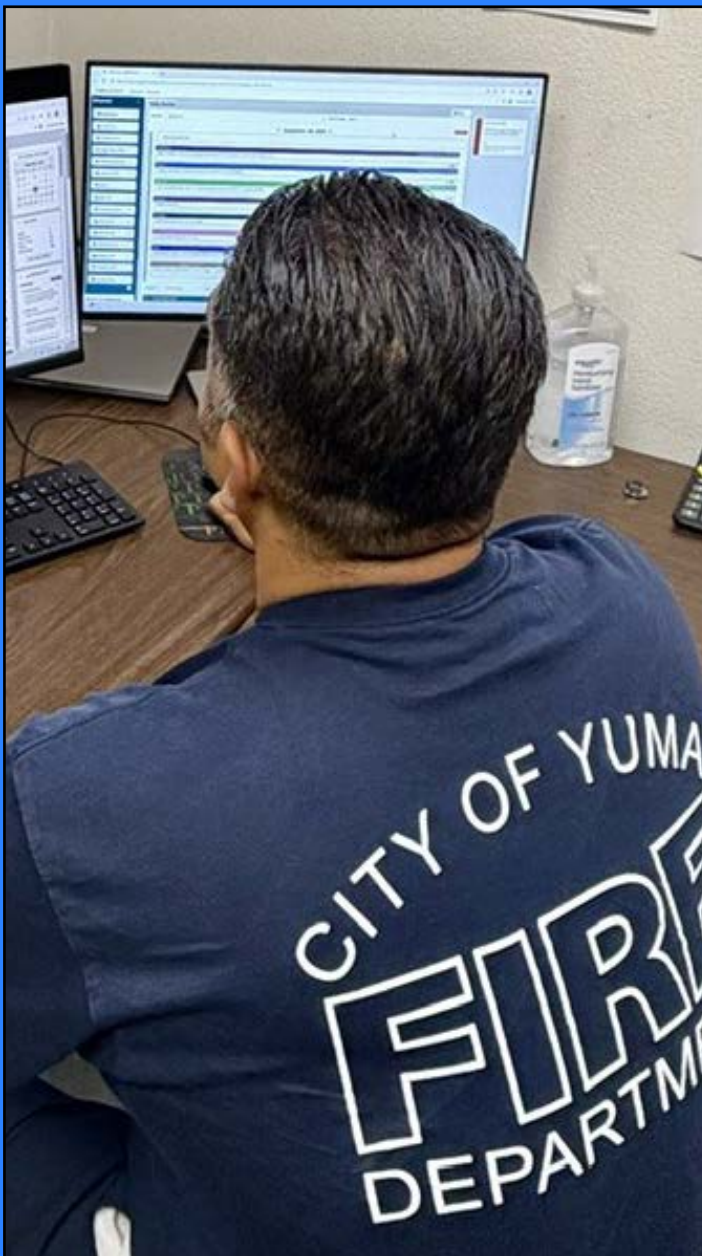
Over many years, Yuma Fire Department’s scheduling process had accumulated layers of staffing, qualification, and overtime rules. One captain built the schedules, while another managed overtime vacancies.

Daily schedules were built in Word, seniority and rotational overtime lists were maintained in Excel, and leave information had to be checked across separate calendars. When

vacancies opened, captains contacted personnel or used the department's CAD paging system, recorded responses, and determined who should receive each shift. Building monthly schedules could consume a full workday or longer.

Filling overtime was even more unpredictable. A scheduler might need to fill 15 or 20 vacancies across the next three days while moving between printed schedules, rotational lists, and personnel qualifications. On difficult days, the overtime captain could remain at the desk into the evening.

Each vacancy could also carry requirements involving rank, paramedic status, or other qualifications. Yuma Fire needed a system that could identify everyone qualified for a specific opening without requiring the scheduler to manually interpret every rule.



BEFORE YOU CHOOSE SCHEDULING SOFTWARE

Leon recommends involving someone who understands the details behind the agency's staffing process. "You have to have somebody who knows what they need in the software before you start shopping for it," he said.

- Include someone who understands staffing, qualifications, & overtime rules.
- Identify what the system must determine when an employee leaves a shift.
- Ask how the software identifies and ranks qualified replacements.
- Determine whether the software removes manual interpretation or simply moves it elsewhere.
- Separate operational requirements from practices created around an older process.

Agencies should also expect the workflow to evolve. "You have to be willing to change your workflow, ideally for the better," Leon said. "Otherwise, you're wasting your time."

THE SOLUTION

Yuma Fire evaluated several scheduling platforms, looking for one that could reduce manual work while accommodating the department's staffing and overtime rules. A closer examination of how each system filled vacancies caused Yuma Fire to reconsider its initial choice.

UNDERSTAND HOW VACANCIES ARE FILLED

One platform Yuma Fire considered searched for someone with the same rank and all the certifications held by the person leaving a shift—even when the vacancy required only a paramedic. That excluded otherwise eligible personnel and still required manual cross-checking, prompting Yuma Fire to reconsider its initial choice.

APPLY RULES TO EACH VACANCY

Yuma Fire configured Slate's fill rules around what each vacancy required and the overtime hours personnel had already worked. One process replaced separate rotational lists for each crew, helping schedulers identify eligible personnel and apply overtime criteria consistently.

CREATE ONE REPEATABLE PROCESS

Slate brought schedules, overtime bids, leave requests, shift trades and announcements into one system. Personnel could review opportunities and respond from their phones, while schedulers selected a fill rule and let Slate apply Yuma Fire's criteria.



THE RESULTS

Through these efforts, Yuma Fire achieved significant results:

BEFORE SLATE:

AFTER SLATE:



MONTHLY SCHEDULE BUILDING

A full workday or longer

Approximately two hours



SCHEDULING ADMINISTRATION

Separate scheduling and overtime captain responsibilities

One person per shift manages both processes



SCHEDULING ACCESS

Information spread across Word, Excel, calendars, CAD pages, and phone calls

Scheduling information (vacancies, requests, and announcements) available through one system and accessible from personnel phones



OVERTIME ASSIGNMENT

Crew-specific lists and manual interpretation sometimes resulted in higher-ranking personnel filling firefighter vacancies

Common rules across crews more often align vacancies with the appropriate rank



OVERTIME PARTICIPATION

Overtime was generally filled for the next three days, leaving personnel less time to plan

Opportunities opened approximately one week ahead; Leon observed personnel who rarely worked overtime beginning to bid



SCHEDULER TRAINING

Process depended heavily on accumulated knowledge

A new captain can learn the process in an estimated two- to three-hour block

“Slate made scheduling a turnkey operation. Our department’s rules are built into the system, so anybody can use it.”

- Kris Leon, Captain, Yuma Fire Department

WHAT'S NEXT

Yuma Fire continues to refine its use of Slate. Leon plans to automate more of the daily overtime notification process and explore Slate for vacation bidding, another workflow that has historically involved phone calls and spreadsheets.

For Yuma Fire, each next step presents another opportunity to bring scheduling work into the same consistent, repeatable, and easy-to-manage process.



MAKE COMPLEX SCHEDULING EASIER TO MANAGE

ImageTrend's EMS and Fire Department scheduling software is a workforce management solution designed to handle shift assignments, time-off requests, availability, and staffing coverage. It helps ensure the right personnel are assigned to the right shifts while reducing manual scheduling work.

[Learn more about our scheduling software and request a demo today.](#)



1-888-469-7789 | www.ImageTrend.com

©2026 ImageTrend, LLC. All rights reserved. Published: September 2026; Information subject to change without notice.