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## Ignore NSW's 15 minute off stretcher instructions

NSWA has been frustrated all year with the lack of enthusiasm shown from ADHSU members for one of their newest ideas to get more cars on the road. They mandated that all paramedics need to call Control to seek permission to take longer than 15 minutes in the off stretcher status.

So they have reissued the related work instruction, reminding paramedics that compliance with it is mandatory – just like the crib break and extension of shift work instructions.

We sent out this newsletter ([Clueless Ambulance Executive is turning NSW into a sweat shop](#)) in January and our position on this issue hasn't changed: simply ignore the work instruction and if asked by a DOM about it let them know you were too busy doing your job to let Control know what you were doing at the 15-minute mark. Be polite, because many DOMs have quietly let us know they do not agree with this policy (and know the Service will send them off on another errand before long anyway).

The Service needs more paramedics, not outdated scientific management via stopwatch, if it's going to reduce response times. Adding up one or two saved minutes per job might look great on a Health Bureaucrat's spreadsheet, but it will increase the frustration felt by a workforce that has been on receiving end of ill-thought-out reforms. Closing busy suburban stations to open Super Stations and staggered starts are two examples that paramedics paid for in a further erosion of work/life balance that led to little benefit or even a detriment to patients.

If NSW takes us to the IRC on this issue, we'll make it clear that our members will continue to ignore this type of instruction from an employer who still has no idea how many crib breaks each staff member is receiving, let alone finding ways to provide one. So continue to do your job thoroughly and professionally throughout the off stretcher phase – this includes taking a moment for yourself if required because as NSW keeps saying, your safety and wellbeing is paramount.

Stuart Hatter  
**Divisional Manager Ambulance**