



LOG IN

SUBSCRIBE NOW

# THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

Part of the McClatchy Media Network

Local News Restaurants Chiefs Royals Opinion • Personal Finance Betting Obitua

LOCAL

## Lawsuit claims Kansas City skirting court mandate on overtime pay for EMTs, paramedics

By Joe Robertson

[jrobertson@kcstar.com](mailto:jrobertson@kcstar.com)

MAY 13, 2017 7:00 AM



ORDER REPRINT →



A lawsuit on behalf of certain emergency medical technicians and paramedics says Kansas City has systematically reduced some salaries to circumvent a 2014 court ruling against the city on overtime pay. FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS OCHSNER [cochsner@kcstar.com](mailto:cochsner@kcstar.com)



Only have a minute? Listen instead

Powered by **Trinity Audio**

00:00



1.0x

02:04

Three years after Kansas City settled claims that it had failed to pay certain overtime wages, Fire Department medical staff are back in court saying the city is circumventing the court's ruling.

A lawsuit filed Thursday in Jackson County Circuit Court on behalf of certain emergency medical technicians and paramedics says the city has lowered some pay scales — so that the plaintiffs continue to work overtime hours but haven't seen higher wages.

“They (the city) had a clear mandate to pay overtime,” plaintiffs’ attorney Mike Hodgson said, referring to [the 2014 federal court ruling](#). “We believe this is an attempt to avoid paying (higher wages for) overtime by manipulating employees’ rate of pay.”

A spokesman for Kansas City said it has treated the employees fairly in accord with the court and the Fair Labor Standards Act.

“The City believes it took proper steps to comply with the FLSA following the Court’s 2014 order, while maintaining an efficient, responsive medical unit,” the city’s statement said. “The City will review the new lawsuit and respond appropriately.”

The city agreed to two settlements, in 2014 and 2015, that Hodgson said totaled \$3.475 million, affecting 160 employees.

The situation arose after the Fire Department merged with the Metropolitan Ambulance Service Trust in 2010. The original lawsuit claimed that certain medical personnel were incorrectly being treated as exempt fire personnel who work “static” shifts that earn overtime only after more than 49 hours a week are worked.

Since the settlement, the plaintiffs contend, the affected medical staff are now getting paid overtime, but their pay scales were reduced so their wages did not increase.

The lawsuit comes as the [Fire Department is under criticism](#) for how it manages its staffing and high overtime costs. This year, the department has budgeted \$9.5 million to cover overtime.

*Joe Robertson: [816-234-4789](tel:816-234-4789), [@robertsonkcstar](https://twitter.com/robertsonkcstar)*

---

## Take Us With You

Real-time updates and all local stories you want right in the palm of your hand.



THE KANSAS CITY STAR APP →

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

- Start a Subscription
- Customer Service
- eEdition
- Vacation Hold
- Pay Your Bill

**LEARN MORE**

- About Us
- Contact Us
- Newsletters
- Archives
- Sports Betting
- Personal Finance

**ADVERTISING**

- McClatchy Advertising
- Place an Ad
- Place a Classified Ad
- Place an Obituary
- Staffing Solutions
- Political | Advocacy Advertising

Part of the McClatchy Media Network

**COPYRIGHT**

**COMMENTING  
POLICY**

**PRIVACY  
POLICY**

**YOUR PRIVACY  
CHOICES**

**TERMS OF  
SERVICE**