



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
*Department of Transitional Assistance*  
*600 Washington Street • Boston MA 02111*

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**Field Operations Memo 99-17**  
**July 1, 1999**

**To:** Transitional Assistance Office Staff

**From:**  Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

**Re:** Random Moment Sampling

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**Background**

The Department has always been required to charge each federal program their correct share of administrative costs; this "cost allocation" of administrative expenses has been done through the use of caseloads and other statistics. However, a new federal regulation requires the Department to implement a new method for determining cost allocation of administrative expenses to federal and state programs.

To avoid 100 percent time-keeping through the use of daily time sheets, the Department will randomly sample Transitional Assistance Workers to determine what kind of activity they are engaged in and what kind of cases or programs are involved. This new methodology is called "Random Moment Sampling" or "RMS" and it is very important to the Department to support the receipt of federal funds.

**Random Moment Sampling (RMS) is NOT for the purpose of measuring work performance or attendance.**

Random Moment Sampling will be implemented on July 1, 1999 and will be an ongoing process.

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**What Is  
Random  
Moment  
Sampling?**

RMS is a technique for scientifically determining the amount of effort spent by a group of employees on various activities. The process involves Transitional Assistance Workers receiving a telephone call from the DTA "Random Moment Sample Coordinator" or "RMS Coordinator" at Central Office and being asked questions about what activity they were engaged in just prior to receiving the call.

**What Is  
Random  
Moment  
Sampling?  
(Cont.)**

The selection of who will be called and when calls will be made is completely random. Due to the randomness of the selection process, some Transitional Assistance Workers will probably be called more often than others, but everyone is subject to the same probability of selection. No Transitional Assistance Office or group of workers is being selected over another Transitional Assistance Office or group of workers.

Most Transitional Assistance Workers can expect to receive approximately three calls within a three-month period. Each call will take approximately five minutes or less.

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**Types of  
Questions**

Transitional Assistance Workers will be asked questions about what they were working on in the minute just prior to receiving the call. Examples of these questions include, but are not limited to:

1. Just prior to receiving the telephone call, were you working on a specific case?
2. If you were working on a specific case, what category was it and what is the case SSN?

**Note:** No confidentiality rules are broken by cooperating with this process. If the Transitional Assistance Worker is working on a specific case, the case number must be provided to the RMS Coordinator.

3. What type of case activity were you working on?
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**Types of  
Answers**

Examples of case activities include:

1. Processing an Initial Application,
2. Transition and Eligibility Reviews,
3. Domestic Violence Referral and Intervention,
4. Case Management,
5. Employment Services,
6. Card Issuance and/or EBT Services

**Types of  
Answers  
(cont.)**

7. Services Relating to Closed Cases (Transitional MassHealth, Child Care, etc.),
8. General Administration and All Other Activities (includes staff development and training, general work-related reading, filing, break, lunch, personal leave, sick leave, etc.)

Depending on the general activity, more specific information may be requested. For example, the specific case management function may need to be identified. This might include authorizing a crib and layette payment, funeral payment, Q payment, helping a recipient with an extension request, address change, etc.

The RMS Coordinator may then ask the Transitional Assistance Worker for specific types of assistance the case receives. For example, if the Transitional Assistance Worker told the RMS Coordinator that he or she was working on a TAFDC case, the RMS Coordinator may ask if the case also receives public assistance food stamps.

If the Transitional Assistance Worker was not working on a specific case, the RMS Coordinator will ask what activity the Transitional Assistance Worker was involved in just prior to receiving the call. This may include such activities as attending a staff meeting, at lunch, or on a break. It is understood that leaves, breaks, and general administrative activities will typically occur, and where that is the case, that should simply be reported to the RMS Coordinator. Reporting misinformation will skew the results and could result in the loss or delay in receipt of federal funds.

**What To Do  
If  
Unavailable  
When Called**

There are many reasons why the Transitional Assistance Worker may not be available when called. Some of the reasons include, but are not limited to, he or she:

- was on another telephone line,
- was away from his or her desk,
- was with an applicant or recipient and could not be interrupted, or
- was on a break/ill/vacation, etc.

**What To Do  
If  
Unavailable  
When Called  
(cont.)**

If unavailable when called, the "Random Moment Sample Coordinator" or "RMS Coordinator" will leave a voice-mail message. The telephone call **MUST** be returned as soon as possible and the activity reported as accurately as can be remembered during the random moment requested.

The Central Office RMS Coordinators are:

Mary Halmkin, Director of Federal Revenue  
Maryann Prokos, Assistant Director of Federal Revenue  
Tedla Baleh  
Roberta Maxson  
John Pattavina  
Joanne Valente

The RMS Coordinator's telephone number is **(617) 348-5025**.

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**Questions**

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478.

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