

Q3 In the past, the annual quota was enforced quarterly with a buffer zone, meaning that attorneys only needed to meet 75% of their pro rata goal by the end of the first quarter, 80% by mid-year, and so on, to be considered fully successful. Do you believe a similar buffer zone should be implemented for the two proposed check points of January 31 and May 31? If so, should it be based on a percentage, a specific number of cases, or a certain number of weeks? Please elaborate.

Answered: 340 Skipped: 38

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The current system should be left alone. Mid-year and year end are appropriate. Buffer zone is absolutely needed if there is a change. There are too many factors outside of our control that impact how fast we can turn around a decision.	9/19/2024 12:31 PM
2	No	9/19/2024 11:42 AM
3	unsure	9/18/2024 1:02 PM
4	yes, percentage.	9/18/2024 11:33 AM
5	Yes, I believe the buffer zone would be helpful if there was quarterly enforcement, particularly for those with slow-signing VLJs.	9/18/2024 8:08 AM
6	Yes, number of cases	9/17/2024 6:07 PM
7	Doesn't matter	9/17/2024 6:01 PM
8	Yes, a similar buffer zone should be implemented. Maybe, by requiring attorneys a specific number of cases for the two proposed checkpoints.	9/17/2024 12:20 PM
9	yes	9/17/2024 12:09 PM
10	yes. w/ percentage of pro rata goal	9/17/2024 12:03 PM
11	Yes	9/17/2024 11:52 AM
12	Not sure.	9/17/2024 11:51 AM
13	unsure	9/17/2024 11:44 AM
14	I think adding in these check points feels like a way to try to hurt attorneys who are doing their best to achieve the quota. If the check points are put in place a buffer zone could offer an equitable solution based on meeting 75% of the goal. This would account for factors outside of the attorney's control, such as judges who are slow to sign cases, as I have personally experienced.	9/17/2024 11:37 AM
15	Yes, but it all depends on when cases are counted (i.e., at receipt or at signing).	9/17/2024 11:37 AM
16	Yes, I believe that a buffer zone should be required. Some judges, like mine, take significant amounts of annual leave during the first part of the year and appear to sign more case in the second and third trimesters. Holding attorneys accountable to a standard when their judges may or may not be available seems unfair to me. I think a percentage of pro rata cases for that period seems fair. Based on absolutely no data, 75% for the first trimester and 85% for the second check point seems fair.	9/17/2024 11:34 AM
17	A buffer would be very helpful. So long as the attorney is at least 75% of the pro rata goal by the end of each check in seems more than fair. It shows the attorney is clearly working, but so much can ebb and flow in work and home life that 25% wiggle room is needed.	9/17/2024 11:30 AM

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18	Yes. Cases.	9/17/2024 11:29 AM
19	I would love a buffer zone, especially since we don't yet know how this will work and the DOC system is still very new	9/17/2024 11:29 AM
20	Yes a buffer zone should be allowed. I think it should be based on a percentage of that particular attorney's standard at the time of evaluation. This accounts for unique factors like leave taken.	9/17/2024 11:28 AM
21	Yes and should be used if MGT will only count signed cases	9/17/2024 11:23 AM
22	Yes, based on percentage. It is the fairest way to do it. Everybody's situations are different and just because they are not at a certain number of cases by a preset date does not mean that they are "not performing." Life happens at different times, and anyone can turn in crap and be green. But some of us care about the work associated with our names and our VLJs' names and fall behind when we have bigger or more difficult cases that we cannot just fly through for the sake of "numbers." So allow for buffer and by percentage so that leave and life are accounted for.	9/17/2024 11:21 AM
23	Yes, with a comparable percentage to past practices.	9/17/2024 10:28 AM
24	Yes - a percentage seems fair as in the past.	9/17/2024 10:19 AM
25	Yes, percentage	9/17/2024 10:16 AM
26	No because there is a range of leave used by judges during different parts of the year	9/17/2024 9:44 AM
27	yes, within a certain number of cases	9/17/2024 9:34 AM
28	Yes but not sure which method is best	9/17/2024 8:26 AM
29	Definitely a buffer zone. VLJs vary too much in their timely handling of decisions for an across-the-Board cut-off. Percentage seems the fairest way. If credit were given for submission instead of signing of cases, a buffer would not be as important.	9/17/2024 8:07 AM
30	no, I do not believe a buffer zone should be implemented	9/17/2024 7:52 AM
31	Unsure. Production can change based on the complexity of case assignments. A buffer is reasonable but the attorney still needs to make it up. Pushing 120+% to the final quarter would only create more stress.	9/17/2024 7:35 AM
32	Percentage. A hard number could be difficult to meet.	9/17/2024 7:33 AM
33	A buffer zone should be a percentage, no specific numbers. Cases vary so drastically that we should not be penalizing someone who gets a few hard cases back to back without some sort of buffer.	9/17/2024 7:32 AM
34	Yes, the current system works fine	9/17/2024 7:10 AM
35	I believe any enforcement of quota beyond the mid-year and end-of-year is unfair, unrealistic, and should not be enforced, especially if VLJs do not have similar requirements.	9/17/2024 7:08 AM
36	I think it should be based on a percentage as that would provide the most consistent numbers for individual Board members.	9/17/2024 6:35 AM
37	Sure. Based on a specific number of cases short of the goal. 5 cases within goal to be specific.	9/17/2024 12:49 AM
38	No, I don't feel this is necessary. I think the proposal reflects management's poor attitude towards attorneys or that we're not worthy to have the year to make our quota or that we should be fired ASAP without considerations of growing with the job or getting use to it or that sometimes we have personal challenges in our lives that can impact our work	9/16/2024 11:05 PM
39	There should be a buffer, and for all attorneys meeting quality standards, submitted but unsigned cases should be counted.	9/16/2024 10:31 PM
40	Yes. Percentage might make more sense for part timers, but cases would be easier to visualize	9/16/2024 7:03 PM
41	No	9/16/2024 4:52 PM
42	yes	9/16/2024 4:25 PM

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43	Yes. I understand the need to keep people on track, but draconian enforcement of the specific numbers is horrible for morale.	9/16/2024 4:13 PM
44	Yes, based on a percentage similar to the current buffer.	9/16/2024 3:55 PM
45	As I'm a GS13 from the June 2022 cohort, I'm not familiar with the buffer zone. However, I do believe a buffer should still be implemented for both quota systems.	9/16/2024 3:50 PM
46	Yes, 75% buffer is fair to keep people on track without punishing them unduly.	9/16/2024 3:46 PM
47	It should be based on a percentage because if I take 8 weeks parental leave starting October 1, a specific number would really mess me up (same if I have maxed out my leaves and take all of December off and all of January off) there is no way I would hit a specific number if there is proration. It could come into conflict.	9/16/2024 2:59 PM
48	Yes, there should be a buffer - not sure what it would look like	9/16/2024 2:52 PM
49	The annual quota should remain an ANNUAL quota, with ANNUAL enforcement only.	9/16/2024 2:33 PM
50	No experience with the buffer zone.	9/16/2024 2:27 PM
51	I believe there should be a buffer zone. I do not currently have a preference as to how it should be calculated.	9/16/2024 2:22 PM
52	I, personally, do not have a preference or strong opinion either way for this question.	9/16/2024 2:09 PM
53	Yes, based on percentage (no specific reason, just preference)	9/16/2024 1:53 PM
54	Some manner of buffer would be better than none. Indifferent about the suggested bases.	9/16/2024 1:49 PM
55	Yes. Based on percentage.	9/16/2024 1:22 PM
56	I think cases turned in but not yet signed should be taken into consideration. Otherwise, I have no strong opinions on the buffer zone.	9/16/2024 1:00 PM
57	buffer by percentage	9/16/2024 12:54 PM
58	Yes a similar buffer zone should be implemented, based on a percentage. The micromanaging is ridiculous, as long as I meet production for the year why am I being bothered.	9/16/2024 12:49 PM
59	Yes, a buffer zone is needed to accommodate for slow judges. If a judge takes leave, I don't get proration for that. I think it should be based on a certain number of pay periods (or weeks). The percentage seems to hard to calculate and implement, and a specific number of cases would have to be subject to proration, (right?) and could also be hard to calculate. If the argument is that this will be for slower judges, they usually aren't more than 2 pay periods behind, so that would be my proposal. Also, it seems unusual for a judge to take more than 2 weeks of leave at a time, so if you give them time to catch up on missed emails and meetings, you wouldn't fall more than 2 pay periods behind.	9/16/2024 12:33 PM
60	Yes	9/16/2024 12:25 PM
61	There should be a buffer- I'd say 75%?	9/16/2024 12:09 PM
62	I think we have been doing just fine with the current standards and incentives. People can work harder and do overtime to reach the quarterly incentives provided, which allows for the Board to continuously hit their numbers. We've done a great job this year with the total number of decisions and I think the quota now is the right measurement for the Board. We shouldn't keep trying to change things and make work harder/less enjoyable just because execs want to constantly change stuff and push us to the edge of our production capabilities. It's not right.	9/16/2024 11:55 AM
63	I am always green.	9/16/2024 11:51 AM
64	Yes - Otherwise, it would be like having EOY x3/year. I already have to be at goal to pass mid-years on my team (based on upper management guidance), and that is very stressful. I would be ok with a reasonable percentage or specific number of cases (e.g., being behind 10 cases for any goal is difficult to catch up from), but we definitely need some kind of buffer.	9/16/2024 11:47 AM
65	I don't think a check point would be helpful for January 31 as it would account for the period during the holidays when many attorneys and judges take a lot of leave, including through MLK day. If a buffer zone is implemented, I think it should be either a percentage of the annual goal, or a prorated number of cases based on leave taken and the annual goal.	9/16/2024 11:43 AM

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66	Buffer zone sounds good	9/16/2024 11:33 AM
67	Offhand, a percentage seems most fair given the removal of the issues-track and the variability of cases but this is the first I've heard of this so I haven't considered it extensively.	9/16/2024 11:32 AM
68	Keep the buffer.	9/16/2024 10:52 AM
69	I'm not sure why the Board wants to introduce this new metric. It's an administrative burden so reduces productivity on a broad scale. I guess I need to understand more about their reasoning for doing so. Is everyone procrastinating? This year I fell behind because I was pregnant and had a condition that made it difficult to work but it was an unusual circumstance and I was able to get green again but it took longer than I would have liked because I also got called for grand jury duty. I'm a pretty strong attorney otherwise, so I would have been demoralized if I was placed on a PIP due to an unusual intersection of circumstances. It was painful enough getting periodic emails from my VLJ asking me for updates on my plan to catch up.	9/16/2024 10:48 AM
70	Yes, I would okay with a buffer zone based on the percentage of the prorated number	9/16/2024 10:44 AM
71	Yes, a percentage of the cases needed by that attorney to be on pace for their annual goal.	9/16/2024 10:42 AM
72	Yes, I think the old system was good and should be used again especially if the VLJs are not expected to meet check points of January 31st and May 31st	9/16/2024 10:37 AM
73	I support the idea of buffer zones and check in points only twice a year. Buffer zones should be based on percentages of pro-rata goals for each attorney.	9/16/2024 10:31 AM
74	I think the buffer zone you mention is reasonable.	9/16/2024 10:31 AM
75	There should be a buffer zone based on a percentage of goal that is expected, like in the past. This is fair. It balances management's concerns with the realities of work. If you don't do this, people will not submit any more cases after the goal is met for the year.	9/16/2024 10:29 AM
76	i dont agree that a buffer zone should be implemented	9/16/2024 10:21 AM
77	No, we're adults, we know our year end quota and the consequences of not meeting it. I don't support weekly or monthly check-ins. This is my biggest complaint at the Board. Here's an example: I work Mon, Th and Fri. I took vacation this year, was not behind quota, returned on a Monday and worked but did not submit a case that day. Wed COB, a supervisor at the Board contacted me to ask if I was ok. When I responded affirmatively and asked why, she questioned why i had not yet turned in a case. As I don't work Tuesdays and Wednesdays, it was almost comical. I've worked at the Board for 32 years and have never not met my quota. However, during these 3+ decades, even when I was producing at 130%, I never had a year during which I've been on quota each and every week. Life happens and everyone has difficult weeks here and there. This constant checking of numbers is unnecessary and degrading.	9/16/2024 10:21 AM
78	Yes, there should be some sort of buffer. Not certain of the metric.	9/16/2024 10:19 AM
79	Yes. Based on a percentage.	9/16/2024 10:17 AM
80	Yes- I'm not sure how the buffer zone should be implemented. I suppose percentage considering pro-rations, etc. I believe there is an unspoken line of nine cases that we aren't supposed to fall below anyway.	9/16/2024 10:13 AM
81	I do. I remember the previous version of buffer zones, and think it worked well. Those in the buffer zone after Q1 knew very well where they stood and that they would need to ramp things up, but at the same time had 3 more quarters to improve.	9/16/2024 10:09 AM
82	I do not care either way	9/16/2024 10:09 AM
83	A buffer zone is necessary, we are not robots. It should be consistent with what is already in place.	9/16/2024 10:06 AM
84	No idea	9/16/2024 10:05 AM
85	Yes, I do think there should be some range you should be allowed an exception for - maybe within 6 cases of the target. It should be a number the attorney could realistically catch up to	9/16/2024 10:05 AM
86	yes	9/16/2024 10:03 AM
87	The annual quota should only be enforced annually.	9/16/2024 10:00 AM

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88	I believe a buffer zone is necessary and appropriate. I don't have any insight or opinion on how to implement it. I have only been at the Board for 1.3 years	9/16/2024 10:00 AM
89	yes, I think a percentage. Being part-time, I think I would be unfairly disadvantaged if I was judged by a set number or time period.	9/16/2024 9:57 AM
90	A percentage would be better since, I would hope, these quarterly checks will be prorated for time off and such. Allowing a 15% buffer is fair. A buffer zone is not a want but a need. Asking people to pretend life outside of work does not exist/should not impact work is one, inhumane, and two, impossible. People need a chance to catch up if they go through a rough period one quarter. Also, I am seriously confused by why this was even suggested. We have had record breaking numbers every single year since 2020. We can do our jobs without being micromanaged and it is insulting to think this will do anything but cause panic for people (and in turn lower production/increase turnover).	9/16/2024 9:51 AM
91	Yes	9/16/2024 9:48 AM
92	I do believe it is reasonable to have quarterly markers where an attorney must be at goal to prevent all parties from an unreasonably bad last quarter. I think this is a decent compromise if management stops implementing plans to make production miserable again (removing case track/issue track).	9/16/2024 9:47 AM
93	Yes. The prior percentages are OK if a more frequent enforcement is implemented.	9/16/2024 9:45 AM
94	As a new attorney, I am unfamiliar with all of this. When I was hired, I was told that I needed 156 cases per year, and there was no mention of required quarterly checkpoints. Any change to make reaching the quota more restrictive is harmful for new attorneys especially. Since they are proposing higher standards measured quarterly, this goes against their stated premise that management wants to see more new attorneys succeed.	9/16/2024 9:42 AM
95	NA	9/16/2024 9:42 AM
96	Yes, especially if it is signed cases. I don't have a strong opinion on which method used, but earlier in the year judges take holidays. My judge is taking off the entire beginning of October.	9/16/2024 9:42 AM
97	No, quarterly quota should not be imposed.	9/16/2024 9:41 AM
98	percentage	9/16/2024 9:41 AM
99	yes-unsure re implementation	9/16/2024 9:40 AM
100	Yes, percentage seems the most fair to allow for proration for leave, etc.	9/16/2024 9:38 AM
101	Yes. I have no strong preference for how it is implemented, but more wiggle room for attorneys is always good.	9/16/2024 9:37 AM
102	Yes	9/16/2024 9:37 AM
103	I believe a percentage metric would be most fair. The first quarter tends to be the most difficult, especially given the amount of holidays and leave taken during the holiday season. Although leave is prorated, it still causes a disruption in the flow of cases. It takes a little time to recover the flow.	9/16/2024 9:34 AM
104	Yes, I think because we can only turn cases in and have no control over when they are signed by the judge the buffer zone will help.	9/16/2024 9:32 AM
105	Attorneys do not need any additional faux deadline. Please battle against the trimester system, but do not lose sight of the loss of the issue track. The loss of the issue track will negatively impact all attorneys, as junior attorneys will have to complete more issues. The entire Board's production will go down.	9/16/2024 9:30 AM
106	Definitely. I think it should be a certain number of weeks and I think they need to really hone in on those circumstances where the judge is responsible for not signing enough cases to get there.	9/16/2024 9:29 AM
107	Quarterly check ins should not be a thing at all.	9/16/2024 9:27 AM
108	YES - PERCENTAGE	9/16/2024 9:26 AM
109	yes based on percentage	9/16/2024 9:26 AM

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110	percentages	9/16/2024 9:23 AM
111	Yes. Based on percentages as in the past.	9/16/2024 9:22 AM
112	I am fine with the percentage, or number of cases so long as which ever metric is used is prorated for leave, trainings and work stoppages.	9/16/2024 9:21 AM
113	I think a mid-year is a good check point, however, the appraisal period is for the entire year. There should be absolutely NO disciplinary action at the mid-year unless it is statically impossible to be successful at the end of the fiscal year. Quarterly check ins are irrelevant when production is measured by signed decisions rather than turned in decisions.	9/16/2024 9:19 AM
114	Percentage buffer zones seem best	9/16/2024 9:13 AM
115	We've tried the hardline, no buffer case count nonsense before, it didn't work. It undermined morale and created additional conflicts between attorneys and managers. The proposed buffers of 75 and 80% are fine.	9/16/2024 9:09 AM
116	whatever is more fair for decision-writing attys. I trust the Union here.	9/16/2024 9:09 AM
117	Yes. The buffer should reflect whatever will improve both individual and organizational performance. It seems like these proposals are losing focus on what is needed to improve organizational service to Veterans and are more focused on a way to "get ya" on an individual basis.	9/16/2024 9:08 AM
118	Yes. A percentage seems like the best way as it would account for taking leave. What happens if my VLJ takes leave unexpectedly and I have legacy hearing cases?	9/16/2024 9:06 AM
119	yes	9/16/2024 9:05 AM
120	I think there should be a small buffer zone. Perhaps less than the 75% which is easy for struggling attorneys to get behind and just get worse over the year. But VLJs are not always without fault - there are those who avoid attorney cases and then leave them until the end when they suddenly return 6 cases and the attorney is left to turn those around quickly. The buffer zone should perhaps be a week of production or 3 cases? But this problem should be tracked by the SSCs - case movement by the VLJ and the attorney can be to blame. SCs used to track this kind of thing and make sure fault was equally distributed. I would imagine this is even more important with the influx of outside VLJs.	9/16/2024 8:59 AM
121	Yes based on cases - some weeks are just more difficult than other, counting cases other than weeks allows for a fairer buffer	9/16/2024 8:58 AM
122	probably, though I don't think this issue is nearly as significant as the case/issue track treatment, which has a huge opportunity to create an unfair work environment	9/16/2024 8:57 AM
123	Yes, buffers are important, especially coming off the holiday season. Likely based on percentage.	9/16/2024 8:56 AM
124	Some sort of buffer zone should definitely be implemented and an actual percentage rather than a subjective finding by a VLJ keeps it fair but I wouldn't go as high as 80%. I think 75% still gives the attorneys time to catch up by year end. Would we still have mid-year reviews? Or would the two checkpoints be in lieu of mid-years? Why do we need two checkpoints? Is there a significant number of attorneys who are less than FS at mid-year now?	9/16/2024 8:55 AM
125	Buffer zone is good at proposed check points. Not sure how should that be implemented though.	9/16/2024 8:55 AM
126	If enforcement is to be quarterly, there needs to be a buffer zone. I think basing the buffer on a specific number of cases would be the easiest to communicate to staff.	9/16/2024 8:54 AM
127	yes, a percentage seems reasonable	9/16/2024 8:52 AM
128	Perhaps both	9/16/2024 8:51 AM
129	If they can base the buffer zone based on the cases submitted (versus cases signed), that would be great	9/16/2024 8:44 AM
130	not a fan of quota check points. we have a quota and if we meet it, we keep our job. If you are far behind you get a PIP. I don't think the current system is broken	9/16/2024 8:44 AM
131	It seems fair to me that attorneys should be 100% on track at any point during the year absent	9/16/2024 8:43 AM

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something catastrophic happening in their lives, which could presumably be handled on a case-by-case basis. Veterans and tax-payers deserve people doing their job.

132	Yes	9/16/2024 8:41 AM
133	yes--percentage or number of cases	9/16/2024 8:39 AM
134	I do not think there should be a quarterly system at all. In terms of performance standards, the only number that should matter is the number at the very end of the fiscal year.	9/16/2024 8:38 AM
135	Yes, based on percentage.	9/16/2024 8:38 AM
136	Yes. Some judges are slower than others at signing cases.	9/16/2024 8:37 AM
137	A buffer zone is a great idea because there is always an ebb and flow in productivity, and these quota goal proposed check points will add undue stress,	9/16/2024 8:36 AM
138	I am a new attorney not currently on production; however, so long as a buffer zone has been helpful for the attorneys in the past, then a similar buffer zone should be implemented.	9/16/2024 8:35 AM
139	Buffer zones are a must when checkpoints are involved. The buffer zone for the checkpoints should 1) consider cases submitted but not signed because these checkpoints are supposedly different from end of year ... so there should not be any issue with considering the submitted cases as signed for ensuring we are "on track" specially since attorneys cannot force their judges to do anything like sign cases quickly. The buffer zone should also 2) be based on a percentage or +/- a number of cases (6 cases or the equivalent of a bi-week) whichever is greater. It is not too difficult to fall behind when one is assigned a number of hard cases without any simple ones to balance things out. This can easily result in "falling behind" by a pay period... but that is relatively easy to overcome in the coming weeks... checkpoints should work like a soft goal... while end of year should remain a hard stop/goal.	9/16/2024 8:35 AM
140	It should be based on a percentage of cases, with a variable amount added for slow signing judges. For instance, it should be 85% pro rata goal is still fully successful, but if your judge is a slow signer for that period, it could go as high as 70%.	9/16/2024 8:33 AM
141	No	9/16/2024 8:32 AM
142	I think a certain percentage should be fine. But ultimately, I'm favor of the metric most favorable to employees.	9/16/2024 8:31 AM
143	No. My judge signs cases in bunches. I'm always good for the year but the more checkpoints that are installed the more likely it is I'll be behind during one of them based on this.	9/16/2024 8:29 AM
144	yes a percentage like 75-80% for January because its right after the holidays and maybe 100% by May	9/16/2024 8:29 AM
145	I think a buffer zone could work, but I also think it would be fair if we could count the number of cases turned in awaiting signature at the proposed check points. For me, the biggest issue is that I might have cases turned in but not signed, and that is what I would use a buffer zone to offset.	9/16/2024 8:28 AM
146	Yes, if someone will be able to easily catch up before the end of the year quota, there should not be recorded counseling for it	9/16/2024 8:27 AM
147	I do not believe an annual quota should be enforced quarterly. However, if it is going to be enforced quarterly, a percentage makes sense.	9/16/2024 8:26 AM
148	I think a buffer zone would be good, based on percentage	9/16/2024 8:23 AM
149	Yes, I am not yet on production but especially if all consideration of issues is thrown out, the least they could do is implement buffers for the weeks (like last one) where I handled multi-issue instead of single issue cases	9/16/2024 8:20 AM
150	No preference. I've had VLJs who sign fast enough to not make this a problem.	9/16/2024 8:20 AM
151	So long as leave is pro-rated, I do not believe buffer zones should be created. Unless it is found that all judges 'like' to sign the first quarter cases 1-2 prior to the end of the FY, then a buffer is needed.	9/16/2024 8:19 AM
152	A buffer zone makes sense, particularly for the January check point, as it comes shortly after holidays when many VLJs take leave and aren't around to sign cases.	9/16/2024 8:18 AM

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153	Neither. It should be an end of year goal only.	9/16/2024 8:17 AM
154	Yes	9/16/2024 8:15 AM
155	I think I buffer zone is important. I do not have numbers in mind.	9/16/2024 8:15 AM
156	Same buffer by the same percentages should be in place	9/16/2024 8:05 AM
157	Yes, no preference on how to determine	9/16/2024 8:04 AM
158	75-80% seems reasonable	9/16/2024 8:03 AM
159	No, keep as is without the buffer zone	9/16/2024 8:01 AM
160	I do believe a similar buffer zone should be implemented for the two proposed check points. I think it should be based on a percentage or a specific number of cases.	9/16/2024 8:00 AM
161	I have never been in danger of not hitting exceptional on both the case and issue tracks, so I don't feel it would be right to comment on behalf of people having this problem.	9/16/2024 7:59 AM
162	Yes; I think whatever the union thinks is best.	9/16/2024 7:53 AM
163	Definitely need a buffer zone as the cases are too different on a case by case basis.	9/16/2024 7:52 AM
164	Yes, there should be a buffer zone, and it should be based on a percentage that takes leave and proration into account. This would be particularly helpful in the first proposed checkpoint which covers many of the major holidays where many people take more leave and cases may not be signed as quickly.	9/16/2024 7:52 AM
165	Yes, the buffer zone should be based on a percentage. Additionally, if an attorney has been fully successfully or more for their entire career at the Board, they should not be penalized for failing to meet a mid-year point.	9/16/2024 7:51 AM
166	Yes	9/16/2024 7:50 AM
167	I think there should still be a buffer zone. I don't have a preference on percentage vs. number of cases as long as proration is taken in consideration for each individual.	9/16/2024 7:49 AM
168	Yes. We are not machines and not all cases we get our equally as difficult. Our production can ebb and flow and get bogged down in complicated cases.	9/16/2024 7:48 AM
169	Unsure.	9/16/2024 7:45 AM
170	Yes, a percentage.	9/16/2024 7:44 AM
171	Yes, a buffer zone is needed. Should be based on a percentage, I believe, to reflect the annual quota	9/16/2024 7:43 AM
172	Unsure	9/16/2024 7:42 AM
173	some sort of buffer zone should be created, especially since judges vary widely in their timeliness signing. i	9/16/2024 7:41 AM
174	I think this is a much better system for attorney-VLJ relationships because the VLJ (who has 6-8 attorneys) deserves a buffer like this for case signatures. If an attorney is less concise, or does not write in the VLJ preferred style, requiring the attorney/VLJ to be 100% at goal during these periods will put an artificial, unnecessary strain on those relationships.	9/16/2024 7:41 AM
175	Yes, I believe a buffer zone should exist for the first to periods and % sounds good	9/16/2024 7:39 AM
176	Yes, a buffer zone should be enforced with a percentage of 80%.	9/16/2024 7:37 AM
177	Yes, should have some sort of buffer.	9/16/2024 7:37 AM
178	Yes, a buffer zone is desirable. A specific number of cases necessary for the buffer zone is preferred.	9/16/2024 7:36 AM
179	doesnt impact me	9/16/2024 7:29 AM
180	Sure - for whatever it's worth, when I am not green, it is usually because my VLJ hasn't gotten around to signing cases (he's out on vacation, etc.)	9/16/2024 7:28 AM
181	yes	9/16/2024 7:27 AM

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182	I'm frustrated by the lack of clarity. Perhaps a buffer zone isn't needed, but rather a requirement that one must not miss 2 consecutive checkpoints. To me, a PIP would be appropriate when a check point isn't met.	9/16/2024 7:25 AM
183	I think having a checkpoint after Jan. 31 is ridiculous given the number of holidays there are and VLJs/attorneys being off.	9/16/2024 7:25 AM
184	Yes - percentage	9/16/2024 7:24 AM
185	I'm not understanding the question / issue	9/16/2024 7:18 AM
186	i think that is fair	9/16/2024 7:18 AM
187	Yes	9/16/2024 7:13 AM
188	Yes	9/16/2024 7:11 AM
189	Yes	9/16/2024 7:08 AM
190	Yes, based on number of cases.	9/16/2024 7:07 AM
191	Yes. There needs to be a buffer, as VLJs may be out sick, on vacation, etc., and unable to sign cases submitted by attorneys.	9/16/2024 6:59 AM
192	A buffer zone should be eliminated to prevent attorney from being penalized for an imbalanced caseload or under the direction of an incompetent VLJ who does not have the skillset or incentive to sign cases in a timely manner. VLJs should have performance standards equivalent to decision writing attorneys.	9/16/2024 6:58 AM
193	Yes, a buffer zone should be implemented however, there really should only be a semi-annual and annual quota. Decision writing attorneys encounter numerous variables throughout the year which impact production. It is impossible to predict all vacations, illnesses, family emergencies, deaths, etc. Additionally, it is impossible to predict workflow and technology issues. For example, an attorney can face a month of extremely difficult cases which all take more time than the average case or weeks on end of Caseload lag times. Therefore, quarterly or trimester quotas does not allow for enough time for all these potential issues to work out and for production to even out.	9/16/2024 6:46 AM
194	leave a buffer zone. I don't have a preference on what it is based on.	9/16/2024 6:20 AM
195	Yes, and it should be on an attorney-by-attorney basis, depending on the complexity of cases and the number of revisions requested by the VLJ, with other relevant circumstances, such as years at the Board, individual medical issues, etc., also considered.	9/16/2024 6:17 AM
196	No, this essentially undermines the annual production quota turning it into a quarterly production quota. VLJs are capable of recognizing production deficiency throughout the year and should be left to do so on their respective teams.	9/16/2024 5:16 AM
197	Yes, because otherwise I will not be able to take my own leave, and my VLJ's ability to sign my cases for various reasons like their taking leave or a busy hearing docket will certainly impact the cases I have signed.	9/16/2024 4:14 AM
198	Yes. A buffer of some kind is needed. 75% shows that the attorney is basically on track to meet the yearly goal. There could be many legitimate reasons why the attorney is not currently at 100%, especially if the Issues Track goes away. Why WOULDN't the attorney behind if he or she has just done, for example, 3 big-issue cases, requiring weeks of work, and got credit for only 3 cases?	9/16/2024 12:25 AM
199	yes, buffer zone, percentage seems easiest w/ prorated time considerations, maybe 75% for 5/31, 90% for 5/31	9/15/2024 11:30 PM
200	No opinion on a buffer	9/15/2024 10:19 PM
201	yes, and it should be based on a percentage of cases	9/15/2024 8:47 PM
202	Buffer zone must be in place, unless the distribution of cases is standardized, to include specific issues, number of issues, size of the claims file, pendency of appeals, etcetera. The buffer zone at any given point should be proportional to expected % of annual production with a buffer at 10% of the remaining goal, i.e. at the end of the first quarter, the target would be 25% of annual production with buffer of 10% of the remaining 75% or 7.5% of annual quota. In	9/15/2024 3:24 PM

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numbers, if annual goal is 156 cases, on January 1 , production should be at 27-39 cases and in May at 70-78 cases.

203	Yes	9/15/2024 3:05 PM
204	Given the number of things outside the attorney's control (case distribution, VLJs signing for credit, etc.) a buffer is important. In addition, the purpose of the check is to identify attorneys that may have difficulty meeting the end of the year quota. I would suggest that being behind more than a full PP of cases/issues (submitted, not signed as some attorneys have cases pending for a week or more) would be an indication the attorney is struggling and may require the VLJ to reach out to determine what the issue is preventing the attorney from completing cases.	9/15/2024 2:57 PM
205	A buffer zone sounds beneficial but I can't say for sure because I didn't experience it so I am not sure of the downsides to it. But if its implemented at two checkpoints instead of quarterly, then I believe it would be beneficial to employees meeting their annual goals	9/15/2024 2:45 PM
206	Yes, buffer zones are critical, however calculated.	9/15/2024 2:22 PM
207	Yes. Use a 2-week buffer for the first and second trimester check ins.	9/15/2024 1:00 PM
208	I do not believe there should be any quota until the end. If there must be something, 75%, 80% and so on is preferable.	9/15/2024 12:45 PM
209	sure	9/15/2024 12:25 PM
210	Probably, particularly given holidays and judge absences during Q1	9/15/2024 11:49 AM
211	yes, people should not be put on pips if they are within reasonable distance of fully successful	9/15/2024 10:45 AM
212	Yes, there should be a buffer zone.	9/15/2024 10:31 AM
213	Absolutely need a buffer zone based on a percent. VLJs fall so far behind on case signings. At multiple points this year I had nearly 20 cases pending. Plus, my VLJ goes on military leave and will sometimes just leave cases until his return.	9/15/2024 8:27 AM
214	Not sure	9/15/2024 7:49 AM
215	Yes, I think a percentage sounds like a good idea.	9/15/2024 12:17 AM
216	I understand enforcement of the annual quota is necessary to protect the judge but I find it frustrating to call it an "annual" quota if we're going to be tracked quarterly. With that said, a buffer zone based on percentage could work.	9/14/2024 9:36 PM
217	I think a buffer zone is necessary. Percentage makes sense to me but am open to any form of implementation.	9/14/2024 7:55 PM
218	Yes, there should be a buffer for the new check points. It should be a percentage, since different folks work part-time, like I used to, so their numbers should be lower.	9/14/2024 5:58 PM
219	A percentage.	9/14/2024 4:26 PM
220	Yes, a percentage	9/14/2024 3:45 PM
221	I don't have experience with the buffer. It sounds right though.	9/14/2024 3:19 PM
222	Absolutely. I don't have a good feeling for what this is like yet, but 75% sounds reasonable.	9/14/2024 3:16 PM
223	Yes and at a number of cases	9/14/2024 2:32 PM
224	Yes. I think it should be based on a percentage. 80%, then 90% and 100%, for the first, second and third trimesters, respectively.	9/14/2024 1:27 PM
225	Yes, I think there should be some kind of buffer, maybe based on a percentage of the pro rata quota. Ridiculous to put someone on a PIP in May because they are a few cases behind.	9/14/2024 12:53 PM
226	Yes and a %	9/14/2024 12:37 PM
227	Yes, there should be a buffer zone. The 75% and 80% would be reasonable.	9/14/2024 11:50 AM
228	I don't think it should be changed at all.	9/14/2024 11:29 AM
229	Yes - a buffer zone should be implemented. Because the number of cases could vary widely	9/14/2024 11:23 AM

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due to long term leave (illness, family leave, etc.) I think a percentage is best. This will also help VLJs, as getting every case signed by those dates will create an "end of year" burden an additional two times a year. In order to make that happen, they will need a deadline of when cases can be submitted, which effectively cuts off days in that period for attorneys to get cases in. That deadline may vary by judge team, thus creating a situation where, by the virtue of the team to which an attorney is assigned, some attorneys actually have a longer period (even if its by a few days) to get cases in and signed.

230	Yes, a similar buffer zone is necessary.	9/14/2024 10:56 AM
231	I think the percentage, based upon prorated cases, is a good suggestion.	9/14/2024 10:56 AM
232	I do not believe there should be a buffer, but for the proposed checkpoints, cases submitted but not signed should be included. An attorney should not be punished because their judge is slow to sign	9/14/2024 10:19 AM
233	I like the 75% of pro rata goal by first quarter; 80% of pro rata goal by mid-year and so on standard.	9/14/2024 10:15 AM
234	A 75% buffer seems fair.	9/14/2024 10:02 AM
235	it's fair to have check points with buffer zones	9/14/2024 9:39 AM
236	A buffer makes sense. Probably a percentage, whichever accounts for varying use of leave or other time out of office during different quarters or trimesters.	9/14/2024 9:19 AM
237	a similar buffer zone should be implemented	9/14/2024 8:16 AM
238	A similar buffer zone for the trimester check points based on a prorated percentage (taking into account leave, work stoppage, etc)	9/14/2024 7:41 AM
239	There needs to be a buffer zone, especially if we are held to credited upon signature.	9/14/2024 7:10 AM
240	No, quarterly checks should not be implemented. This would add more stress to attorneys as it is already stressful enough to worry about meeting the annual quota. As long as the annual quota is met, why bother with a quarterly checks?	9/14/2024 6:55 AM
241	percentage sounds the best.	9/14/2024 6:29 AM
242	I do not have a preference as I always have more than the required amount of cases completed to prevent such issues.	9/14/2024 5:45 AM
243	I was unaware of this and have no real opinion on it. Buffer zones make sense.	9/14/2024 1:11 AM
244	Yes	9/13/2024 11:37 PM
245	yes. specific # of cases would be easier to keep track of as attorneys	9/13/2024 10:13 PM
246	yes - certain number of cases b/c life is unpredictable	9/13/2024 10:03 PM
247	If being on track quarterly is required, then a similar buffer zone that is fair should be applied.	9/13/2024 9:53 PM
248	YES, we need a buffer zone	9/13/2024 9:33 PM
249	I don't know. I'm at 100% or better for most of the year. I don't really care. This doesn't affect me.	9/13/2024 9:01 PM
250	Yes and percentage should be fine.	9/13/2024 8:41 PM
251	Yes because the first quarter will undoubtedly be the hardest with all of the Yes, the first trimester will be particularly difficult for me due to the holidays, which for me is Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. Plus, what if someone's judge takes a lot of leave for winter or holidays during that first trimester and is unable to sign cases. Because of all the leave so many people take in the fall/winter, and the federal holidays, I think 75% would be fine for the first trimester, then 85% for the second trimester.	9/13/2024 8:38 PM
252	no comment.	9/13/2024 8:31 PM
253	Percentage	9/13/2024 8:02 PM
254	Yes, a buffer zone should be implemented based on a percentage (or whatever is most advantageous to the attorney)	9/13/2024 7:55 PM

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255	Yes, using weeks, as it is easiest to understand. Perhaps within 2-3 weeks (6-9 case) of goal.	9/13/2024 7:50 PM
256	I don't think we have to have a buffer zone. But we do need consideration for cases that are turned in but not signed. My judge often keeps cases for 30-50 days before signing them.	9/13/2024 7:41 PM
257	Yes, percentage of cases.	9/13/2024 7:36 PM
258	No opinion	9/13/2024 7:26 PM
259	I agree with a similar approach.	9/13/2024 7:21 PM
260	I believe a 15% buffer for Jan 31, and a 10% buffer for May 31 would be reasonable, since one sometimes gets hit with a number of large cases early in the year that throws off production numbers.	9/13/2024 7:15 PM
261	Yes. I think a specific number of cases would be the most straightforward way to approach this. The Veteran would know exactly how far behind they are.	9/13/2024 7:03 PM
262	Yes, a buffer zone is only fair considering that VLJs are overworked and do not sign cases with much speed.	9/13/2024 7:02 PM
263	Yes	9/13/2024 6:52 PM
264	I do not think their should be pro rata goals by end of each first quarter - its an annual quota that's enough	9/13/2024 6:51 PM
265	A buffer zone of the sort described is essential. It is very possible to simply have a bad quarter, but a great year, in terms of numbers, due to things like unusually complex case assignments, etc. I think a percentage of pro rata goal is fair.	9/13/2024 6:50 PM
266	No-this does not account for leave	9/13/2024 6:39 PM
267	I am not familiar with the past annual quota, therefore cannot opine.	9/13/2024 6:35 PM
268	To me this has always been an annual quota, but if so, the buffer zone should be something like 20% of the pro rata goal.	9/13/2024 6:34 PM
269	I have usually been within one case of being green in the past few years, and I was green this entire year. I don't have strong opinions on this requirement.	9/13/2024 6:29 PM
270	Yes to buffer. I would say percentages unless you can tell me how the results would differ under the three proposed buffer zones	9/13/2024 6:28 PM
271	I think the buffer zone is a bad idea. I don't mind the trimester system. BUT- I see this as an option for high performers to take three breaks per year instead of one, and so they are going to see case numbers go down for the high performers	9/13/2024 6:28 PM
272	A buffer zone would be ideal to allow for some degree of flexibility, but I don't have any suggestions regarding the details of how that should be configured.	9/13/2024 6:28 PM
273	These checkpoints would induce perpetual anxiety, impact time off, participation in other VA activities, and create a more frazzled work environment. However, if this has to happen then a percentage would be preferred.	9/13/2024 6:28 PM
274	No	9/13/2024 6:24 PM
275	yes and the percentages continue to make sense to account for proration	9/13/2024 6:11 PM
276	80% is a good buffer. EEs can manage queues and catch up. 75 for the first and 80 for the second as it is closer to the EOY.	9/13/2024 6:05 PM
277	Yes	9/13/2024 6:04 PM
278	Yes	9/13/2024 5:57 PM
279	It's an annual goal. It should remain an annual goal. There are no studies to show that enforcing quarterly quotas would result in more cases. Show the evidence before implementing any changes.	9/13/2024 5:56 PM
280	Yes, a buffer zone should be implemented. I do not know if it should be based on a percentage, specific case number, or weeks though.	9/13/2024 5:55 PM

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281	I think there should be a buffer zone, but I think that 90% would be appropriate; 80% sounds hard to come back from at the midyear	9/13/2024 5:48 PM
282	Yes. Percentage.	9/13/2024 5:48 PM
283	No, we are attorneys. We have an ethical obligation to do our jobs competently. To do that, we may fall behind the artificial quota set by management and it may take months to catch back up. As long as we are caught up by the end of the year that should be sufficient for management (and we should get paid for unpaid overtime that is required to meet their quota). If there is buffer zone, it should not be reduced as time goes on. Again, as long as we get our work done by the end of the year, that's what should matter.	9/13/2024 5:47 PM
284	I think if it's based on a specific amount of cases that is prorated for that attorney given leave/holiday etc. having a number is easier to track.	9/13/2024 5:45 PM
285	Keep the current system. The proposal from management ups it unfairly to other employees.	9/13/2024 5:44 PM
286	yes	9/13/2024 5:39 PM
287	Ideally they would drop the bad idea for the trimester system. But a buffer based on cases would be good.	9/13/2024 5:38 PM
288	Yes, a buffer zone should be implemented, based on a percentage of cases turned in, but not necessarily signed.	9/13/2024 5:38 PM
289	I think checks are fine, and quarterly checks would provide useful information on how to support attorneys to be fully successful. However, I don't think these checks should influence our performance evaluations, since there are things outside their control that greatly effect the number of signed decisions they are able to produce. If these were implemented, I think the buffer zone would be very necessary to attempt to account for this.	9/13/2024 5:35 PM
290	Yes, a buffer should be provided, uncertain whether it should be based on percentage, number of cases or number of weeks--there are fluctuations in the complexity of cases and productivity for a given time period is necessarily affected.	9/13/2024 5:32 PM
291	If they are going to quarterly, the buffer seems fair. It would be easier to track if it was displayed in cases per quarter broken down from the percentages.	9/13/2024 5:32 PM
292	Any check in mid-year should be for temperature check only - so your job should not be on the line at this point. Rather, it should be a moment to check in with your judge to see where you are and where you need to be BEFORE the critical end year date. Maybe there have been a string of really difficult cases that need to get written or maybe your judge was out of town; there are way to many variables for this to work as a hard deadline.	9/13/2024 5:27 PM
293	percentage	9/13/2024 5:26 PM
294	Yes, if mgmt wants to implement more frequent checks, a buffer percentage would be appropriate.	9/13/2024 5:26 PM
295	A buffer zone should be given if check points are imposed. Life happens. Sometimes you have a few week period with more complex, difficult cases and/or 20+ issue cases which makes you fall behind on your number of cases. A percentage would be fair.	9/13/2024 5:26 PM
296	I think this will cause more work for VLJs, who already have a heavy workload, and problems for attorneys who write for VLJs that don't have a quick case review and sign turn around.	9/13/2024 5:25 PM
297	Yes. For reasons already discussed in meetings there are way to many elements outside of our control for us to be held to a specific number of cases at proposed check points.	9/13/2024 5:25 PM
298	No comment.	9/13/2024 5:24 PM
299	I'm fine with the current buffer zones.	9/13/2024 5:24 PM
300	Yes, by percentage to account for VLJ delays	9/13/2024 5:23 PM
301	I think that this is a great idea. I also feel that the VLJs should be required to sign cases within 30 days of submission.	9/13/2024 5:22 PM
302	I think the new two proposed checkpoint system is likely to result in good attorneys getting released when they're fully capable of getting back on track. However, should that system be implemented I believe a buffer zone is necessary.	9/13/2024 5:21 PM

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303	no	9/13/2024 5:21 PM
304	I believe the percentage buffer is fair.	9/13/2024 5:20 PM
305	yes	9/13/2024 5:20 PM
306	The most important buffer zone for me is the first trimester. I am generally ahead after that point. There are a lot of holidays in November/December/January, and it puts judges behind.	9/13/2024 5:20 PM
307	I do not think there should be a buffer as it is an annual goal and we should only be held to it at the end of the fiscal year.	9/13/2024 5:20 PM
308	Yes.	9/13/2024 5:20 PM
309	It should be based on a percentage.	9/13/2024 5:19 PM
310	Yes	9/13/2024 5:19 PM
311	yes	9/13/2024 5:17 PM
312	I was unaware of any buffer zone.	9/13/2024 5:17 PM
313	Obviously there should be a buffer zone. Makes no sense not to have one. Seems reasonable to make it no more than 5 or 6 weeks behind (because the attorney wouldn't be too far gone such that they couldn't catch up again).	9/13/2024 5:17 PM
314	No, the system in place is much better than the one proposed.	9/13/2024 5:16 PM
315	Yes, I'd need similar buffer zone as I'm often near the buffer zone at every check point and meet goal at the end of the year. the current percentage makes sense.	9/13/2024 5:15 PM
316	Percentage is the only way to check, because of time off	9/13/2024 5:15 PM
317	If you eliminate the issues track, I will absolutely need a buffer zone to make these goals.	9/13/2024 5:14 PM
318	Yes, percentage.	9/13/2024 5:14 PM
319	I think what we have right now is preferred. As long as your green (FS) by each quarter should suffice.	9/13/2024 5:13 PM
320	yes, an attorney might be undergoing a personal hardship or trauma not amenable to sick/annual leave (or (s)he might simply not have such leave but not qualify for FMLA/donated leave), but these circumstances might change for better during the FY at issue; the litmus test should be whether it is likely that the attorney would be able to catch up w/i foreseeable future	9/13/2024 5:13 PM
321	I think the annual quota should stay the same and no quarterly check ins should occur.	9/13/2024 5:13 PM
322	No, the 52 cases (with proration) is and should be the standard. However, depending on how cases are counted (i.e. regarding the high issue cases), there should be notice taken of cases with high numbers of issues. This should be managed by VLJs and a failure to meet numbers should involve discussions between the VLJ and the executives.	9/13/2024 5:11 PM
323	If attorneys are measured based on cases signed, and that measure it outside of their control, then the buffer should be at least however much the judge is behind on signing cases that attorney has drafted.	9/13/2024 5:10 PM
324	yes, not sure how, but buffer should be considered especially with submitted but not signed cases	9/13/2024 5:10 PM
325	No. I think the proposed check points are fine. years ago, we were checked weekly.	9/13/2024 5:09 PM
326	Yes. If we are getting rid of the quarterly check in, then fully successful should still remain a percentage of the overall goal. It would be unfair to go from a system where attorneys are permitted a buffer to a system where no buffer is offered.	9/13/2024 5:07 PM
327	Yes, due to the fact that schedules vary as due cases. If someone has an large multi-issue case that is difficult at the beginning of the year that would put them behind before they get to the quarter review and that isn't equitable.	9/13/2024 5:06 PM
328	I support a similar buffer zone based on a percentage.	9/13/2024 5:05 PM
329	Yes because sometimes people are sick or out of town, etc. 80% seems fair.	9/13/2024 5:04 PM

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330	Yes	9/13/2024 5:04 PM
331	I think the buffer zone for the pro rata goal is necessary. I do not think there should be check points because our numbers are not due actually until the end of the fiscal period. Having additional check points would be stressful. A buffer zone is necessary.	9/13/2024 5:04 PM
332	yes, a buffer is healthy	9/13/2024 5:04 PM
333	Yes, based on a percentage.	9/13/2024 5:03 PM
334	I do not understand the need for any buffer zone. If we don't make our quota at end of FY year, that should be it. It would be impossible to meet our timeliness criteria and be too far behind unless there were extreme circumstances, so I don't understand the need for mid-year benchmarks.	9/13/2024 5:03 PM
335	Yes but I'm not sure which data point makes the most sense	9/13/2024 5:03 PM
336	Yes, based upon percentage	9/13/2024 5:01 PM
337	yes	9/13/2024 5:01 PM
338	N/a	9/13/2024 4:59 PM
339	IF a buffer zone is necessary, assuming that this number represents signed decisions, the buffer zone should be 60 per cent after the first quarter and 60 percent at mid-year, or 80 percent for SUBMITTED decisions. of goal	9/13/2024 4:04 PM
340	Number of weeks based on the prorated goal with submitted cases counted.	9/13/2024 1:32 PM