

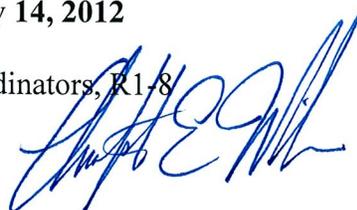


United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Fire Management Branch
National Interagency Fire Center
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705



Refer to: FMB120020

February 14, 2012

To: Regional Fire Management Coordinators, R1-8
From: *Acting* Chief, Fire Management Branch 
Subject: Guidance for implementation of Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy Memorandum 2011-2, Department of the Interior Fire Boot Stipend

This memorandum provides eligibility requirements and payment procedures for the Wildland Fire Boot Stipend as promulgated in the attached memorandum, Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend (see attachment 1 – OWFC Policy Memorandum 2011-2).

The payment of a one-hundred dollar (\$100) annual stipend is authorized for employees holding a valid Incident Qualification Card with a fitness rating of moderate or arduous. Validity of the card is determined by the fitness expiration date on the card. This authorization includes Permanent Full Time (PFT), Term, Career Conditional, STEP/SCEP, Temporary, Collateral Duty, and Casual employees hired using the Administratively Determined (AD) hiring authority.

Prior to entering on duty and/or performing moderate or arduous duty firefighting operations, employees (including casual employees) are expected to purchase a pair of boots meeting the standard found in Chapter 7 of the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations*.

While purchasing a pair of boots meeting the standard is not a condition of employment for collateral duty firefighters, it is a required condition when performing in positions requiring a fitness rating of moderate or arduous. Therefore, collateral duty firefighters in positions requiring a fitness rating of moderate or arduous are also entitled to the \$100 per year stipend.

The boot stipend is considered a fringe benefit and is taxable. Unit Fire Management Officers (FMOs) are responsible for determining who is eligible for the stipend and shall track who receives the boot stipend each calendar year. To ensure that duplicate payments are not made, supervisors of transferred employees should check with the employee's previous home unit before issuing the annual stipend. Supervisors and FMOs should manage the number of collateral duty and casual employees with moderate and arduous fitness ratings in accordance with local need. The stipend payments shall be processed as follows:

Permanent Full Time Employees (PFT), Term, Career Seasonal, STEP/SCEP, and Temporary Employees

For Preparedness funded and Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) funded employees, the annual

stipend will be processed through payroll using the same funds used to fund the employee's base salary with the project code of **FFBT0**. This will be processed through the National Business Center (NBC) using FWS Form 3-206. (See Attachment 2 – FWS Form 3-206). For example, the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) for a Preparedness funded employee from Region 4 will be: FF.F100009FFBT0.2A 12X FF04RGOK00

FF.F10000 (Enter FF.F10000 for Preparedness or FF.F31000 for HFR funded employees).
09 (Enter 09 - Region 09 will establish the account).
FFBT0 (Project code).
2A (ABC Code – Enter 2A for Preparedness or 2F for HFR)
12X (Partial fund – Enter 12X for FY 2012. This will change in FY2013 to 13X).
FF04RGOK00 (Enter applicable Cost Center from employee's home unit).

For eligible collateral duty employees whose base salary is non-fire funded, the annual stipend will be paid for using the WBS listed above from the applicable Preparedness or HFR funds.

If a collateral duty employee's home unit does not receive Preparedness or HFR funding, then the Cost Center for that employee should reflect the district FMO's home unit.

Example 1 - An eligible employee located at the Okefenokee NWR whose base salary is paid out of Preparedness funding for FY2012 would enter the following code on FWS Form 3-206:
FF.F100009FFBT0.2A 12X FF04RGOK00.

Example 2 - An eligible employee located at the Okefenokee NWR whose base salary is paid out of HFR funding for FY2012 would enter the following code on FWS Form 3-206:
FF.F3100009FFBT0.2F 12X FF04RGOK00.

Example 3 - An eligible collateral duty employee located at the Okefenokee NWR whose base salary is paid out of refuge resource management funding for FY2012 would enter one of the following codes on FWS Form 3-206:

FF.F100009FFBT0.2A 12X FF04RGOK00 (Use the preparedness code if employee is primarily used for fire suppression)

FF.F3100009FFBT0.2F 12X FF04RGOK00 (Use the HFR code if employee is primarily used for HFR projects)

Administratively Determined (AD) Employees

AD employees who meet the same qualifications outlined above and are **hired into a position requiring** a moderate or arduous fitness rating shall also receive the annual stipend. Once the casual employee has been determined to be eligible by the hiring unit, the annual boot stipend of \$100 will be entered as a commissary item on the casual's Emergency Firefighter Time Report (OF-288) that is processed after their first fire incident in each calendar year and will be charged to the project code **ADBT0**. The agency should follow the steps below.

1. Complete FWS Form 3-206 with authorized signature.
2. Attach FWS Form 3-206 to casual's Emergency Firefighter Time Report (OF-288).

3. Indicate in the Remarks/Commissary section of the OF-288 the current year, "Boot Stipend" and the amount of the reimbursable (\$100).
4. Identify the cost string that the boot stipend should be charged to.

The Home/Hiring Unit Cost Accounting Code on the OF-288 should include the hiring unit's Cost Center. The WBS should reference either suppression or HFR funds and include region 09 and the project code of ADBT0. The ABC code will be 2A for suppression or 2F for HFR projects.

Example 4 - An eligible AD hired at Okefenokee NWR on suppression activity in FY 2012 would enter the following code on the OF-288:

FF.F2000009ADB0.2A 12X FF04RGOK00.

Example 5 - An eligible AD hired at Okefenokee NWR on an HFR activity in FY 2012 would enter the following code on the OF-288:

FF.F3100009ADB0.2F 12X FF04RGOK00.

The OF-288 will be processed through the DOI Casual Payment Center (CPC). The CPC will:

1. Add the stipend to the casual employee's payment as a taxable reimbursable.
2. Track the entry to eliminate duplicate reimbursement in the same calendar year.
3. Send the casual employee a Wage and Earnings Statement.

In 2012, the DOI CPC will process the casual employee's boot stipend as a negative commissary. It will be taxable wages and included on their W-2 in block 1, Wages. There will be a system change for 2013 that will allow the CPC to input the casual employee's boot stipend as a taxable fringe benefit.

Questions regarding this program should be directed to Ted Mason, FWS National Fire Safety Specialist at 208-387-5831 or Theodore_Mason@fws.gov or Billie Farrell, Administrative Officer, Fire Management Branch at 208-387-5536 or Billie_Farrell@fws.gov.

Attachment 1 - OWFC Policy Memorandum 2011-2

Attachment 2 - FWS - Form 3-206 (Firefighter Boot Stipend Reimbursement)

cc: Rebekah Giddings, Washington Office Human Resource Office
Jeff Rupert, Chief, Division of Natural Resources and Conservation Planning
Jim Kurth, Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System
Casual Payment Center



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

OCT 14 2011

Memorandum

To: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, National Park Service

From: Kim A. Thorsen, Deputy Assistant Secretary – Law Enforcement, Security, and
Emergency Management 

Subject: Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy Memorandum 2011-2
Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recently settled an arbitration case with the Federal Indian Service Employees (FISE) regarding the purchase of wildland fire boots. During the proceedings, the attorney for FISE wrote to the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health in the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), contending "... the Department of the Interior pays for these boots for the wildland firefighters employed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (almost all of whom are non-Indian) while it forces the predominately American Indian firefighting crews who work alongside them to pay for their own boots." The FISE asked the DOL to "escalate this to the Secretarial level and ask Secretary Solis to contact Secretary Salazar directly" for "prompt attention" and an "immediate response" from the Department of the Interior (DOI) to their complaint.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) establishes wildland fire standards for use by the bureaus and the NWCG Wildland Fire Boot standard has been adopted by each bureau as appropriate for safe work on the fireline. The NWCG concluded that protective footwear is very personal in nature and can be used by employees off the job site. Therefore, appropriate boots should be a condition of employment for firefighting positions. Boots should be purchased by the employee prior to employment.

Within the DOI, guidelines for purchasing boots for firefighters have indeed varied by bureau. However, the bureaus and Office of Wildland Fire, in consultation with the USDA Forest Service, have reached a consensus on the appropriate level and mechanism for providing financial assistance to all employees who, as a condition of employment, are required to purchase wildland fire boots. Our new policy will allow a \$100.00 per year stipend to qualified firefighters as described in the attachment. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Kirk Rowdabaugh, 202-606-3447.

Attachment: Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy Memorandum 2011-2,
Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend

Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy 2011-2
Wildland Fire Boot Stipend

Purpose:

To provide Departmental guidance to the bureaus and offices on the payment of a yearly stipend to employees for wildland fire boots.

Background:

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) establishes wildland fire standards for use by the bureaus, and the NWCG Wildland Fire Boot standard has been adopted by each bureau as appropriate for safe work on the fireline. The NWCG has also concluded that protective footwear is very personal in nature and can be used by employees off the job site. Therefore, appropriate boots should be a condition of employment for firefighting positions and should be purchased by the employee prior to employment.

Scope:

This policy applies to all bureaus and offices within the Department, and to all employees, regardless of their employment status.

Time Frame:

This policy is effective January 1, 2012 and remains in effect until rescinded or modified.

Policy:

The payment of a one-hundred dollar (\$100.00) per year stipend is authorized for employees holding a valid Incident Qualification Card with a Fitness Rating of moderate or arduous, and who, as a condition of employment, are required to purchase wildland fire boots that satisfy the standards described in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* and the *Wildland Fire and Aviation Program Management and Operations Guide (BIA)*. Validity of the Incident Qualification Card is determined by the Fitness Expiration date on the card.

Personnel hired under the Administratively-Determined (AD) authority who qualify will receive the stipend at time of payment following their first fire assignment in an IQCS qualified position requiring an arduous or moderate fitness rating in each calendar year. DOI bureaus and offices will follow established payment processes for disbursement of stipends for all other personnel assigned to wildland fires.



Kim A. Thorsen
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Law Enforcement, Security and Emergency Management

10/14/11
Date

Distribution:

Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, Fish & Wildlife Service
Director, National Park Service
DOI Fire Executive Council
DOI Bureau Fire Directors

Date: _____

Memorandum

To: National Business Center
Payroll Operations
P.O. Box 272030
Mail Code: **D-2661**
Denver, Colorado 80227

From: Fish and Wildlife Service
Region: _____

Subject: Report of Taxable Benefit (**Firefighter Boot Stipend
Reimbursement**)

Employee Name: _____

Employee SSN: _____

Department: IN Bureau: 15 Subbureau: _____

Amount of Entitlement: \$ _____ (not to exceed \$100 annual)

Cost Structure Number: _____ - _____ - _____
(Work Breakdown Structure) (Fund) (Cost Center)

Fiscal Officer: _____
(Signature and Title)

Supervisor: _____
(Signature and Title)

Date: _____ Telephone Number: () _____

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

Information on this form is protected by the Privacy Act. Disclosure may be made only to authorized persons according to Title 5 U.S.C. 552a(b).