



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Instruction Memorandum No. FA IM-2015-009  
Expires: 09/30/2018

To: State and Center Directors

From: Acting Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation

Subject: Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Guidance for the Department of the Interior (DOI) Medical Standards Program (MSP) Process for 2015

**Program Area:** Fire and Aviation Management.

**Purpose:** This instruction memorandum (IM) provides BLM-specific direction for employee participation in the DOI MSP and medical clearance process when required as a condition of hire, or prior to participating in the arduous work capacity test (WCT) for 2015.

Comprehensive Health Services (CHS) has been selected as the contracted medical provider for the DOI. Phased implementation to CHS will occur over three years, with phase one starting in 2015. Nevada and Oregon/Washington will be the first programs to implement the contract in a pilot program in 2015.

This IM also augments BLM policy direction for the WCT found in the 2015 *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, chapters 2 and 13.

**Policy/Action:** The following employees, either as a condition of employment or to perform arduous wildland fire duties, must have the DOI MSP exam completed by a licensed physician/medical clinic:

- All new permanent employees (permanent full time, career seasonal, term Pathways interns)
- All permanent employees who have not had an exam in the past three calendar years (on or after January 1, 2012)

- All persons, including administratively determined/emergency firefighters (AD/EFF), who answer yes to any question on the Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ)
- All temporary employees

All AD/EFF firefighters will fill out the HSQ. If they answer yes to any questions on the HSQ, they must then have the DOI MSP medical exam packet completed by a licensed physician/medical clinic.

Phase I Contract Implementation: (Nevada, Oregon/Washington)

A small group of employees in Nevada have been selected for and have begun a pilot program to assess the new CHS exam procedure. Problems in the process will be identified and corrected prior to moving ahead with Phase I. Full Phase I implementation for Nevada and Oregon/Washington will occur in January 2015. All arduous rated employees in Nevada and Oregon/Washington, regardless of current exam status will participate in Phase I.

Phase I Exam Payment:

Exam payment for Phase I units has been coordinated through the contract. Payment must not be arranged by individuals or units.

Further information regarding Phase I implementation is described in the November 6, 2014 memorandum “DOI Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program Phased National Contract Exam Implementation” at [http://www.nifc.gov/medical\\_standards/documents/NewExamProcess/Oversight%20Memo\\_Phased%20Implementation\\_FINAL\\_20141106%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/documents/NewExamProcess/Oversight%20Memo_Phased%20Implementation_FINAL_20141106%20(1).pdf).

Exam Process for States Not Participating in Phase I:

States that are not part of the contract Phase I implementation, the processes and exams used in previous years will continue in 2015. The exam package and pertinent information can be found at the DOI MSP website, [http://www.nifc.gov/medical\\_standards/index.html](http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/index.html).

Completed annual exam packet forms and HSQs will be sent to the servicing human resource officer (SHRO) for agency employees and incumbents. All AD/EFF records will be kept with the local hiring unit fire management officer (FMO) or SHRO.

Clearance process:

Firefighters who are given a determination of cleared will provide a copy of the DOI MSP annual exam packet clearance determination page to their supervisor or FMO.

Non-clearance process:

If the determination is not cleared, the SHRO should contact the DOI MSP Customer Service and initiate the Risk Mitigation/Waiver process.

Employees currently in not cleared status may submit further medical information for Medical Review Officer (MRO) review any time by contacting DOI MSP Customer Service.

**Medical Review Officer Review:**

If the FMO or SHRO has concerns about a clinician's performance of the DOI MSP exam, an MRO review should be requested through the DOI MSP. All exams are subject to medical review by the DOI MSP, which could potentially change the examinee's clearance.

**Exam payment:**

The preferred method of obtaining medical exam services is through the utilization of local unit blanket purchase agreements (BPAs) with local medical clinics. If this is not an option, other payment methods may be established by the local unit.

Additional medical tests are not authorized. If the examining clinician recommends further tests to determine firefighter medical clearance, prior approval by the SHRO/FMO is required.

Additional testing or treatment requested by the employee/applicant shall be at their own expense.

The government estimate for the annual exam is \$185. The exam cost should be negotiated with the clinic by whoever is scheduling the exam, or by the contracting officer who establishes the BPA. Exam costs will be paid for by Fire and Aviation using the following code:

**LLFA401000 LF1000000.HT0000 LXSS005R0000 (15X)**

**Timeframe:** Effective immediately.

**Budget Impact:** None.

**Background:** Agency administrators and supervisors are responsible for the occupational health and safety of their employees performing wildland fire activities, and may require employees to take a medical examination at any time. Established medical qualification programs, as stated in 5 Code of Federal Regulation 39, provide consistent medical standards in order to safeguard the health of employees whose work may subject them or others to significant health and safety risks due to occupational or environmental exposure or demand.

**Manual/Handbook Sections Affected:** *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, chapters 2 and 13.

**Coordination:** This IM has been coordinated by the Division of Fire Operations and Safety with the Fire and Aviation Human Resources Officer and the Fire and Aviation Equal Employment Opportunity Manager.

**Contact:** Specific exam questions should be routed to the DOI MSP customer service representatives, 1-888-286-2521, or [wlfcsr@blm.gov](mailto:wlfcsr@blm.gov).

Other program questions should be sent to Michelle Ryerson (or acting), BLM Fire Safety Program Manager, 208-387-5175, [mryerson@blm.gov](mailto:mryerson@blm.gov).

Human resources or SHRO questions should be sent to Tamara Neukam, Human Resources Branch Chief, Fire and Aviation, 208-387-5514, or [tneukam@blm.gov](mailto:tneukam@blm.gov).

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