



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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Instruction Memorandum No. FA IM-2011-013
Expires: 09/30/2012

To: State Directors

From: Acting Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation

Subject: Extension of Wildland Firefighter Incident Qualification Cards (Red Cards)

Program Area: Fire and Aviation Management.

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) provides Bureau of Land Management (BLM) direction for the temporary extension of Wildland Firefighter Incident Qualification Cards.

Policy/Action: The Department of the Interior (DOI) Medical Standards Program (MSP) initiated a contract in January 2010 with Medical Development International (MDI) to provide medical examinations for arduous duty wildland firefighters. Due to the recent decision to not grant another task order with MDI for contracted medical examinations and the associated delays in implementing revisions to the wildland firefighter medical standards program, an extension of Wildland Firefighter Incident Qualification Cards (Red Cards) has been granted until May 4, 2011, for those arduous duty firefighters employed by BLM who have not yet completed the DOI MSP process for this year.

Additional direction related to the DOI MSP program:

- The DOI MSP risk mitigation waiver process is still in effect.
- Employees should not attend any physical examinations previously scheduled by MDI.
- Employees who are waiting on a clearance determination from MDI may continue to use their red card according to the extension granted above.
- Exam status determinations of "Cleared" or "Not Cleared" made by MDI are valid.
- Employees in the "Not Cleared" status may not participate in arduous duty wildland fire activities until they are either:

1. Granted a Risk Mitigation/Waiver decision memo; or,
 2. Transferred from “Not Cleared” to “Cleared” based on further medical information.
- Tentative job offers may be made to new hires, but Enter on Duty Dates must not be offered until an examination determination is made.
 - The Health Screen Questionnaire (HSQ) is not a valid option for attaining arduous duty clearance at this time. Further guidance on the use of the HSQ will be provided in early March.
 - Incident Qualifications and Certification System “Fitness Expiration Date” has been changed at the national level to reflect the May 4 extension date. When firefighters complete the DOI MSP process and Work Capacity Test, the completion date should be entered as normal. If firefighters have already completed the process and received a Red Card for this year, the date will not change; nor will it change the date for those who have a fitness date later than May 4.

A more complete revision of DOI MSP processes, including the revised process for medical exams, will be provided in early March.

The best source for most current information will be through the DOI MSP website:
http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/

Your continued tolerance and professionalism as the program moves forward with full implementation is appreciated. Our biggest concern is ensuring firefighter safety and health while maintaining operational readiness.

Timeframe: Effective immediately.

Budget Impact: None

Background: In January of 2010, the DOI entered into a contract with MDI to provide medical examinations and other elements of the DOI MSP for wildland firefighters. The task order with MDI had expired and on February 17, 2011; the DOI agencies were directed to discontinue all communication with MDI and are no longer performing wildland firefighter medical exams.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: *Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations, January 2011, Chapters 2 and 13.*

Coordination: This IM has been coordinated with the BLM Fire Safety Program, the BLM Fire Preparedness Group, the Branch Chief for Fire and Aviation Human Resources, and the Equal Employment Manager for Fire and Aviation.

Contact: If you have specific questions regarding completed exams, please contact the DOI MSP customer service representatives, 1-888-286-2521 or wlfcsr@blm.gov.

If you have other program questions, please contact Michelle Ryerson, Fire and Aviation Safety Manager, 208-387-5175 or by email at michelle_ryerson@blm.gov; John Owens, Fire Management Specialist-Safety, 208-387-5186 or by email at john_owens@blm.gov.

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