



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

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OWF POLICY MEMORANDUM 2019-004

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

From: Jeffery R. Rupert - Director, Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: 2019 Fire Season DOI Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Process

The Department of the Interior Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program (DOI MSP) Policy Memorandum 2016-014 pertaining to requirements for fire season 2019 for all bureaus can be found at <https://elips.doi.gov/elips/0/doc/4499/Page1.aspx>. Bureau of Land Management Team Rubicon Crews will remain exempt until fire season 2020. Additional DOI MSP guidance is provided below:

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Emergency Firefighter/ Administratively Determined (EFF/AD) Personnel in Alaska

Full implementation of DOI MSP in Alaska for BLM EFF/AD personnel will take place in 2019. Medical exams will be initiated November 2018, carried-out through March 2019 in all Alaska zones. The DOI MSP is working directly with BLM AFS to support successful implementation.

Medical Qualification Expiration Date and Periodicity

It has become necessary to clarify DOI MSP intent on medical qualification currency. Current DOI policy requires arduous duty firefighters complete an exam every three years with self-certification during the off years. Three-year periodicity is based on the date of the actual exam. Annual self-certifications between periodic exams must be completed within 12-months of the previous medical qualification date. If an employee's medical qualification expires prior to successfully clearing a periodic exam or self-certification they are no longer medically qualified. Bureau specific guidance should be developed to clarify the operational impact of expiring medical qualification.

CDC/NIOSH Funded University of Montana Study of DOI Medical Standards Data

Over the next two years the DOI MSP will work collaboratively with University of Montana to support the following firefighter health research objectives:

1. Investigate cross-sectional relationships between occupational exposure to wildland firefighting and markers of cardiovascular and respiratory health and hearing assessed in DOI MSP medical screening examinations between 2014 and current.
2. Evaluate longitudinal impacts of wildland firefighting prior to the first available examination and between examinations on the markers of cardiovascular and respiratory health and hearing described above. Collection of repeated measures of wildland firefighter health will be achieved through review of past DOI MSP medical screening data occurring between 2004-2011 and 2014 to current.

Medical Screening for Light and Moderate Fitness

Beginning in January 2019, the medical screening process for light and moderate fitness testing will be centralized and automated through our national contractor Comprehensive Health Services Inc. (CHSi). Fire Management Officers (or delegate) may request Health Screening Questionnaires (HSQ) for light and moderate fitness participants through the Client Access System (CAS). Participants will be sent log-in information to access and complete the HSQ via the CHSi Employee Access System (EAS) on-line. If significant health issues are identified on the HSQ, CHSi will contact the participant to recommend the appropriate supporting medical information. The participant is responsible for any cost related to obtaining additional medical information; the OF178 exam will no longer be used. Once cleared on the HSQ, the participant will receive a certificate of clearance to participate in the Work Capacity Test.

Validating Firefighter Information in the CHSi CAS

The CHSi CAS is the contracted system for managing and storing firefighter information related to medical exams. CAS also acts as a notification system to help managers and firefighters complete and track steps in the medical qualification process. Therefore, maintenance of up-to-date information, including contact information for all units is crucial. Key items to validate when updating a profile in CAS include:

- Ensuring proper EFF/AD designation is checked in CAS for all examinees as appropriate. This will help ensure the proper funding source is utilized for those medical exam costs.
- Verifying active status. Individuals no longer participating in arduous duty, or no longer affiliated with a unit should be changed to inactive. Users and managers of users left in active status will continue to receive notifications.
- Updating firefighters' contact information, including e-mails and telephone numbers.

Contacts: Any questions can be directed to L. Kaili McCray, DOI MSP Manager at kmccray@fws.gov or 208-387-5810.

cc: Fire Executive
Fire Directors