



United States Department of the Interior


NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
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MAR 26 2020

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To: Regional Directors

From: Acting Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection 

Subject: Administratively Determined Hiring in Support of COVID-19

Recently, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, and President Trump declared a nation-wide emergency pursuant to Sec. 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Act, 42 USC 5121-5207 (the Stafford Act). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is directed to assist state, local, tribal, and territorial governments and other eligible entities with health and safety actions taken on behalf of the American public. As a result, the National Park Service (NPS) has the authority to support COVID-19 emergency staffing needs through administratively determined (AD) hiring as needed.

The Department of Interior (DOI) Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (DOI Personnel Bulletin 20-03), states AD employees can be hired:

1. To cope with a sudden and unexpected emergency caused by a fire, or extreme fire potential, flood, storm, or any other all-hazard emergency that threatens damage to federally protected property, has the potential to cause loss of life, serious injury, public health risk, or damage to natural or cultural resources unless brought under immediate control.
2. To provide emergency assistance to states under formalized agreements.
3. To meet mission assignments issued by FEMA.

Note: FEMA assistance will require execution of a FEMA agreement with states/tribes/territories and the execution of an applicable emergency plan. There may be circumstances when FEMA may request federal resources through other federal authorities or emergency support functions.

Due to the continuing spread of COVID-19 nation-wide, employee and visitor health and safety are a priority service-wide. NPS employees may become unavailable to carry out their mission essential functions due to illness, or when backfilling other positions critical to life, safety, or health, such as mobilizing on Incident Management Teams, ESF-13 law enforcement missions, or other taskings from the Department of the Interior or FEMA. As such, there may be a need to use AD hiring authority to maintain continuity of operations for incident response.

AD hiring can be used for the following:

- Local park dispatch units
- All-hazard incidents, including search-and-rescue and natural disaster response
- Suppression incidents and active ignition of prescribed fire treatments
- FEMA emergency support functions through mission assignments and sub-taskings

The AD hiring authority should not be used to backfill positions due to COVID-19 unless the position is directly related to life, safety, or health.

AD hiring is of uncertain and purely temporary duration and must be terminated when other employment methods can be initiated. This guidance may be superseded if DOI-HR provides additional direction or flexibility regarding the use of the AD hiring authority during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For questions regarding the DOI AD Pay Plan or AD hiring actions, please contact Christine Peters, 208-407-6558, or christine_peters@nps.gov.

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