



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Washington, DC 20240

March 15, 2021

Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors
Attention: Agency Superintendents
Regional Fire Management Officers
Human Resource Officers

From: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs *Darryl LaCount*

Subject: 2021 Fire Season DOI Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Update

This memorandum provides Bureau of Indian Affairs, updated guidance regarding the Department of the Interior Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program (DOI MSP). The updated guidance can be found in the Office of Wildland Fire Policy Memorandum 2016-014 at https://www.bia.gov/sites/bia.gov/files/assets/bia/ots/dfwfm/pdf/OWF_PolicyMemorandum_2016-014_WildlandFirefighterMedicalStandardsProgram_508.pdf and the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book), January 2021, at https://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_ref_redbook.html.

All wildland firefighters with an arduous fitness rating on their Incident Qualification Card (Red Card) will be required to participate in the Department of the Interior, Medical Standards Program (DOI MSP). All wildland suppression programs within the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Tribal organizations are required to follow this direction.

The national contract with Comprehensive Health Services (CHS) has been updated and the Client Access System (CAS) at <https://cp.chsmedical.com/Login?ReturnUrl=%2FHome%2FIndex> and the Examinee Access System (EAS) at <https://eas.chsmedical.com/User/Index?ReturnUrl=%2f> will continue to be used for requesting exams, completing self-certifications or health screen questionnaires and printing certificates of medical qualification to provide at the Work Capacity Test (WCT).

CAS users do not need to order self-certs; this can be done by the examinee via their EAS account. Individuals will be notified of the results and/or can verify results via their EAS account. CAS users will be able to view the results when the self-certification is completed and uploaded by CHS.

The FMB Memo No. 20-001 at <https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/docs/eb-fmb-m-20-001.pdf> adjusted or deferred typical pre-season fire preparedness requirements, in order to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for the 2020 fire season. Per the FMB Memo No. 20-015 at <https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/docs/eb-fmb-m-20-015.pdf>, as of January 1, 2021, the medical standards process reverted back to previous policy direction - exam required every 3-years (36-months) and self-certification in non-exam years. Periodic exams, deferred in 2020, expired on December 31, 2020.

Baselines - All employees participating in arduous duty wildland fire activities who have not completed a comprehensive baseline exam, must complete this exam through CHS prior to participating in the Work Capacity Test (WCT) for the 2021 fire season.

Periodics - Firefighters who have not completed a medical qualification exam in the previous 36 months must complete a periodic exam through CHS prior to participating in the WCT for the 2021 fire season. Firefighters with existing Risk Mitigation/Waivers (RM/W) for ongoing medical conditions may want to consider bringing documentation from their healthcare provider regarding the current status of their condition. Providing updated information at the time of the exam may facilitate a more timely qualification determination.

Self-Certification - All arduous personnel not required to complete an exam in 2021, must complete the DOI MSP Self-Certification Process. The Self-Certification process is available through the CHS Examinee Access System (EAS). Only those individuals whose most recent medical qualification determination was Qualified or Qualified with RM/W may complete a self-certification. Results of completed self-certifications will be printable through EAS. Self-certification results will also be viewable by management in CAS. It is recommended that self-certifications be completed at least five business days prior to a planned WCT.

Light and Moderate Fitness - The medical clearance process for light and moderate fitness ratings are centralized and automated by CHS. All employees, regardless of hiring authority, whose fire line positions require light or moderate fitness ratings, must complete a Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ) through EAS and print the certificate of clearance prior to taking the WCT.

Per Red Book standards, WCT administrators must confirm medical clearance at the appropriate fitness level through review of a clearance list provided by the Fire Management officer (or delegate) or by verifying certificate of WCT clearance at the time of the WCT.

Risk Mitigation / Waiver (RM/W) Process – The Office of Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Planning will be the Servicing Human Resource Office (SHRO) during the RM/W process. Applicants receiving a determination of “Not Qualified” have an opportunity to participate in the RM/W process. Previous RM/Ws remain valid unless there is a change in medical condition. The Servicing Human Resource Office (SHRO) will initiate the RM/W process unless the applicant is an Administratively Determined or Emergency Firefighter (AD/EFF). The RM/W process for AD/EFFs is initiated and facilitated by the Fire Management Officer (FMO) at https://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/Fire-Management-Officer/index.html. The FMO is encouraged to contact the SHRO for the latest RM/W templates and to ensure the appropriate management officials are consulted. SHRO contact information is as follows: strategicrecruitment@bia.gov.

Exam/Self-Certification Periodicity and Changes in Medical Status - A baseline or periodic exam is required every 36-months from the date of the exam regardless of the qualification date. Annual self-certifications between exams must precede the arduous work capacity test by no more than 45 days prior to fitness testing.

Per Red Book standards, if a Department of the Interior arduous duty wildland firefighter (WLFF) develops a significant change in medical status between medical exams or self-certifications, the WLFF is required to immediately report this change to his/her supervisor and complete a self-certification. A significant change in medical status is defined as any injury or illness which may prevent performance of arduous duty. It is critical the employee understands the importance of reporting a significant change in medical status and ceasing arduous duty until cleared. Eligibility for compensation or benefit claims may be affected by a failure to report. If a change in medical status for arduous duty firefighters has been reported, it is incumbent on the supervisor to ensure the firefighter ceases to perform arduous duty and if necessary, ensure all arduous duty related qualifications are prevented from being sent to ROSS in IQCS until the employee has been medically cleared to resume arduous duty work.

A WLFF must also immediately inform his/her supervisor if they have not completed an exam within the previous 36 months and must not resume arduous duty work until completion of a periodic exam and medical qualification.

Validating Firefighter Information - Units will need to continue to validate personnel profiles within the Client Access System (CAS). Constant monitoring and managing of CAS user profiles is important to ensure efficient customer service and security of personnel information.

Questions regarding the DOI MSP can be emailed to wlfcsr@blm.gov or by phone at (888) 286-2521, or Adrian Grayshield, Safety Program Manager at (208) 387-5156 or adrian.grayshield@bia.gov.