



File Code: 6180/5130

Date: November 10, 2008

Route To:

Subject: Treatment for Traumatic Injuries, Including Burns, on Wildfires and Other Incidents

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director and Deputy Chiefs

This letter provides agency clarification on how to deal with burn injuries and all work related injury/illness on wildland fire and other emergency incidents. It also clarifies the role of incident personnel and the role of the Human Capitol Management's Workers Compensation Section (ASC-HCM-WC) located at the Albuquerque Service Center.

All work related traumatic injury claims are covered under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act (FECA) and adjudicated by the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP). To ensure workers receive immediate medical care when necessary, OWCP allows agencies to authorize initial medical treatment using form CA-16. This form is issued to the medical provider and outlines their authorization for treatment and referrals, such as to a burn center. When this form is issued properly the employee is not billed for any work related treatment. OWCP does not impose limits on the amount of medical expenses or the length of time for which they are paid, as long as the charges represent the reasonable and customary fees for the services involved and the treatment is recommended by a qualified physician. This applies to a referral to a burn center as well as any other medical care.

Information regarding the Forest Service Workers' Compensation Program can be found on the ASC-HCM website (<http://fsweb.hcm.fs.fed.us/owcp/all.php>). The web site includes a pocket size card with essential information and phone numbers, including a 24/7 number, in case of injuries and a Questions & Answer section that further explains information on burn injuries and other pertinent issues. Supplemental direction for Incidents is found in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH) Chapter 10, Section 15 and covers the three primary tasks for Incident personnel regarding injuries. These include: (1) Completion of the CA-1 or CA-2; (2) Initial authorization of medical treatment using the CA-16 and in infrequent situations form FS-6100-16; and (3) Timely transmittal of forms and information to ASC-HCM-WC. All claim activity beyond these three items is handled by ASC-HCM-WC rather than incident personnel. Detailed incident processes are summarized in enclosure 1.

The referral of an injured employee to a burn center is the responsibility of the treating physician under the authority provided on the CA-16. If the physician does not make the referral, and the injured employee feels strongly otherwise, contact ASC-HCM-WC immediately so they can work with OWCP to get the decision reviewed. Meanwhile, if possible the Incident should generally send the injured employee home ASAP so they can exercise their right under FECA to go to their personal physician for further evaluation and obtain additional referrals if warranted.

Burned employees and their families may want to access information at the American Burn Association website <http://www.ameriburn.org/> for reference information regarding burns and



their burn center criteria. Please note that there are many facilities that provide burn treatment and we do not endorse any particular accrediting body. Employees are cautioned that it is critical that they or their designated family members need to obtain proper treatment referral so that they are not held personally liable for expenses.

In order to provide the best service, ASC-HCR-WC wants direct contact with the injured worker whenever possible. They serve as the injured workers' single point of contact for advice and liaison to OWCP. If the injured worker is unable to make direct contact with ASC-HCM-WC, anyone can do that on their behalf and Incident personnel or their home line officer may designate someone. Anyone acting on their behalf should be focused on: 1) ensuring contact is made with ASC-HCR-WC; 2) helping facilitate the completion of the CA-1 if not already done by the Incident; and, 3) ensuring that ASC-HCM-WC personnel understand the wishes of the injured worker.

Our goal is to provide injured workers with world class medical care as provided under the FECA and following the established process is one step toward providing that level of service. For additional information regarding this memo, please contact Doug Shjeflo at 703-605-0881 or via e-mail at dshjeflo@fs.fed.us.

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cc: National Fire Directors, HRLs