

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Office of Fire and Aviation  
3833 S. Development Avenue  
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January 14, 2005

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Instruction Memorandum FA IM 2005-009  
Expires: 09/30/06

To: All OF&A Employees

From: Director, Office of Fire & Aviation Management

Subject: Implementation of the Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards for OF&A Employees

**Program Area:** Medical Examinations.

**Purpose:** This Instruction Memorandum (IM) provides the policy for implementing the Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards for Office of Fire and Aviation (OF&A) employees.

**Policy/Action:** The Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards require all *arduous* level wildland firefighters to receive an annual medical examination. Therefore, all OF&A employees in positions that perform *arduous* level wildland firefighting duties (including the militia) will receive an annual medical examination under this new standard.

The annual medical examination conducted under the Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards replaces the SF-78, Certificate of Medical Examination, for *arduous* level wildland firefighter medical clearances. Instead of the SF-78 and a medical screening, employees/applicants will now receive a Baseline, Periodic, or Annual examination, depending on their employment category (permanent, temporary, AD/EFF), age at the time of examination, and the type of medical examination received the previous year. Since this is the first year of implementation for OF&A, most employees will receive a Baseline exam consisting of: a medical history review; a physical examination; corrected and uncorrected far vision exam, in addition to color, peripheral and depth perception; audiogram; EKG (age 40 or older); spirometry; PPD (TB) test; and lab collection (chemistries, CBC, UA, Lipid). Future annual examinations will be required as described on the Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards website at [http://www.nifc.gov/medical\\_standards/](http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/).

Medical examinations under the Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards will be completed through Comprehensive Health Services (CHS). CHS selects and trains local medical providers on the requirements of the medical examination, schedules the examination, receives and reviews the completed medical examination materials, and makes the medical clearance determination. CHS uses a web based Client Access System (CAS) to request and track medical examination data. Examination forms are ONLY available through the CAS web site. Pertinent demographic information will be automatically inserted by CAS onto the exam form at the time the medical examination is requested, saving time and ensuring the employee/applicant receives a current exam form.

The annual medical examination also replaces the Health Screen Questionnaire previously used to determine an individual's fitness to participate in the Work Capacity Test. Therefore, employees/applicants must receive a medical clearance under the Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards prior to participating in the Work Capacity Test.

Implementation of the Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualifications Standards is being accomplished incrementally by geographic areas. This program has already been implemented in the Southwest, Northwest, California, Alaska, and Hawaii. Fiscal Year 2005 implementation will occur in the Great Basin states. The OF&A implementation has already begun with the Fire Operations Group, Smokejumper Unit, employees completing medical examinations. Current employees in the Smokejumper Unit will continue to have their annual medical examination scheduled by the smokejumper unit.

New hires into positions that require *arduous* level wildland firefighting duties will receive a tentative job offer and will have their medical examination scheduled by Human Resources. New hires must receive a medical clearance prior to receiving a final offer of employment.

Current employees whose official position description does not require the fulltime performance of *arduous* level wildland firefighting duties, but who maintain a current Incident Qualifications and Certification Card (Red Card) rating at the *arduous* level (the Militia) will have their medical examination scheduled by a Fire Operations Staff Assistant. Marie Bates will schedule medical examinations for "militia" in the Fire Training Unit, Patricia Sechler for "militia" in the NICC unit, and Kathy Collins – for all other "militia". Employees who fall into this category should complete the attached Request for Medical Examination for *Arduous* Duty form and submit it to the designated Staff Assistant as soon as possible so that a medical examination can be requested. Once a medical examination has been requested, the Staff Assistant will print the exam form from CAS and provide it to the employee.

The employee/applicant completes the medical history section of the medical examination form and takes the form with them to the designated clinic. Upon completion of the medical examination, the physician/clinic will forward the medical examination package to CHS, where medical staff will review and make a final clearance determination. Examination determinations (Pending, Cleared, Not Cleared) are typically posted on the CAS within 10 working days after completion of the medical examination. The Staff Assistant will periodically check CAS and print the clearance status, providing a copy to the employee and to Human Resources for filing in the Employee's Medical Folder.

The Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards is a “clearance” program and is not intended to disqualify existing *arduous* level employees from participating in *arduous* level wildland firefighting duties. Should an employee receive notification of medical non-clearance, they will also be notified of the opportunity to provide further medical information (at their own expense) and/or to request a waiver, a waiver with restrictions, and/or a waiver with accommodation.

Additional information on the Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards can be found at: [http://www.nifc.gov/medical\\_standards/](http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/)

**Timeframe:** Effective upon receipt.

**Budget Impact:** Funding for payment of the annual medical examination through the Interagency Medical Standards Program Manager was authorized by the National Fire and Aviation Executive Board through final implementation.

**Background:** The National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (previously known as the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council), through a letter dated April 6, 2001, authorized the implementation of a new medical qualification standard and physical examination program for all employees who participate in wildland or prescribed fire activities requiring a fitness level of *arduous*. The goal of the new medical qualification standards and physical examination is to ensure that all *arduous* duty wildland firefighters benefit from a consistent interagency medical evaluation process that ultimately provides an added level of safety on the fireline.

**Directives Affected:** None.

**Coordination:** This IM was coordinated with the Chief, Human Resources Management, the Group Manager, Fire Operations and the Group Manager, Support Services.

**Contact:** Technical questions on the Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards should be referred to the Human Resources Assistant for your unit. All other Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Qualification Standards program questions should be referred to Barb Sivey, Employee Relations Specialist, 208-387-5527.

Signed by:  
Larry E. Hamilton

Authenticated by:  
Pat Lewis  
Supervisory Mgmt. Asst.

Attachment:  
Request for Medical Examination for *Arduous* Duty (1 pp)

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