



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

Jennifer A. Ackerman
Director, Office of Human Capital
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C. Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20240

Dear Ms. Ackerman:

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) approves, in part, your August 14, 2024, request of an exception to the 1039-time limit on the temporary appointments of seasonal employees within the U.S. Department of the Interior (Interior), National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Forest Service (FS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). OPM is approving this exception to enable NPS, FWS, BLM, and BIA to make temporary appointments for a period of time not-to-exceed 1560 hours in a service year, specifically for agency response needs as explained below.

OPM approves your request for exceptions to the general limits in accordance with 5 CFR 213.104(b)(3)(i) and 5 CFR 316.401(d)(1). Though your request did not specify an ending date, we are approving this waiver for a period of two years effective from the date of this letter. The longer and annually recurring fire seasons are more consistent with permanent appointments utilizing seasonal work arrangements.

Your request highlights the critical need for the extension of the temporary appointment time limits in response to the increasing length, severity, and locations of wildfire season throughout the United States. Fire seasons, which have traditionally lasted for 6 months, have increased in duration to 9–10-month seasons. While the wildfires are still predominantly in the western United States region, there are an increasing number of wildfires occurring in other portions of the United States, namely the Eastern Temperate Forests. Currently, the National Wildland Fire Preparedness Level is at Level 5, the highest level. Level 5 requires a heavy commitment of national resources, and additional emergency measures to support hot spots. This extension applies only to the occupations listed below, for any grade level (or equivalent) filled nationwide.

Wildfire Management and Support Positions

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| GS 0404 | Biological Science Technician |
| GS 0456 | Wildland Firefighter |
| GS 0462 | Forestry Technician (Wildland Firefighter) |
| GS 2151 | Fire Logistics Dispatchers |
| WG 3502 | Laborer |
| WG 5716 | Engineering Equipment Operator |
| WG 6907 | Materials Handler |

Wildland firefighters under this exception will assist an increasing number of permanent firefighters in Interior, to combat current fires and perform fuel reduction and treatment work that mitigates the ignition of future fires. It will also allow Interior to rapidly respond to hot spots by utilizing personnel from other areas when shortages may occur.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist you. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Darrell Coleman, Human Resources Specialist, at (202) 936-3038, or by email at Darrell.Coleman@opm.gov.

Sincerely,

Latonia J. Page
Deputy Associate Director
Talent Acquisition, Classification,
and Veterans Programs