



# United States Department of the Interior

## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Branch of Fire Management National Interagency Fire Center



Refer to: BFM2024014

February 2, 2024

### Memorandum

To: Regional Fire Management Coordinators, Regions 1-8

From: Chief, Branch of Fire Management EDWIN CHRISTOPHER  
Digitally signed by EDWIN CHRISTOPHER  
Date: 2024.02.02 08:45:47 -0700

Subject: DOI Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program Guidance

This memorandum provides U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidance for the Department of the Interior Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program (DOI MSP). This memorandum supersedes Branch of Fire Management memorandum FMB2023008 dated January 12, 2023, and remains valid until rescinded or replaced. The [Office of Wildland Fire Policy Memorandum 2016-014](#) and the [Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations \(Red Book\)](#) provide overarching guidance.

Comprehensive medical standards are a critical component of wildland fire risk management. All employees seeking wildland fire qualifications with light, moderate and arduous fitness requirements must participate in the process outlined below. This applies to permanent, seasonal, collateral duty, administratively determined (AD), and Refuge Law Enforcement Officers. The Division of Refuge Law Enforcement accepts the fire medical exam in lieu of a law enforcement exam so officers are not required to take both programmatic exams in the same year. Qualifications with no fitness requirement, including security qualifications (SEC1, SEC2, and SECM) are exempt.

The [DOI MSP website](#) has information on medical standards, exams, risk mitigations/waivers, the Work Capacity Test (WCT), frequently asked questions, and more.

**Acuity-CHS** continues to improve the [Acuity Client and Examinee Portals](#). These portals are used for requesting exams, completing self-certifications, and printing certificates of medical qualification to provide at the WCT. Fire Management Officers (FMOs) or their delegate may request access to the Client Portal through their Regional MSP Lead.

### **Medical Clearance for Light and Moderate Fitness Rating**

Employees requiring light or moderate fitness level clearance must complete the DOI Light and Moderate Pre-Fitness Screening Questionnaire through the Examinee Portal. Questionnaires are intended to be completed as close to the WCT date as possible but allowing Acuity 10 days to validate and issue the certificate is recommended. Employees must print their qualification certificate and present it to the WCT Administrator.

To initiate the process, FMOs or their delegate request the “Light and Moderate Pre-Fitness Screening” exam option in the Client Portal and the employee will receive an email with information to access to the Examinee Portal.

Additional information about health issues reported by the employee may be required for Acuity to make a medical determination. Providing this information *during* the questionnaire process reduces the likelihood of a “not qualified” determination. There is no risk mitigation/waiver (RM/W) process for light and moderate fitness level positions.

### **Medical Clearance for Arduous Fitness Rating**

An initial baseline exam is completed for all employees seeking qualifications with an arduous fitness rating and a “qualified” or “qualified with risk mitigation/waiver” determination is required prior to taking the WCT.

FMOs or their delegate request exams for current employees.

JAO staff will enter new employees into the Acuity Client Portal and request comprehensive baseline exams as part of the onboarding process. Rehires and new hires transferring from other DOI Fire Bureaus should already have an Acuity profile and may only require a self-certification or periodic exam. A “qualified” or “qualified with risk mitigation/waiver” determination is required as a condition of hire prior to entrance on duty for arduous positions.

A periodic exam is required every three years (36 months) following the initial baseline exam.

The DOI Self Certification Questionnaire is completed annually between exam years and should be completed at least 10 days prior to the WCT to allow Acuity time to validate and issue the certificate. The “45 days prior” rule has been rescinded. Examinees are required to document changes to their medical conditions, whenever they occur, by submitting a new questionnaire.

Employees must print their qualification certificate and present it to the WCT Administrator.

Employees who receive “not qualified” medical determinations will be instructed to either provide more information or recommend specific mitigations to be considered for the risk mitigation/waiver (RM/W) process. “Not qualified” determinations for conditions that are not “static and stable” require additional information, and Acuity *may* change a determination if the employee provides it. Do not begin the RM/W process until a “static and stable” determination is made.

### **Risk Mitigation/Waiver (RM/W) Process**

If a “not qualified, static and stable” determination is made, the employee may request a RM/W. The RM/W process is described on the [DOI MSP website](#). FMOs and Regional MSP Leads guide the interactive RM/W process, including drafting, routing, and submitting all associated documents within the timeframes specified on the website. The employee’s line officer (usually the Refuge Manager or Project Leader) decides whether the risk is acceptable. JAO staff will review and sign (as SHRO) all new RM/Ws for regular employees, to certify the process has been completed appropriately. FMOs will continue to assume the responsibility of SHRO for Administratively Determined (AD) firefighters. Existing RM/Ws remain valid unless there is a

change in medical condition.

### **Payment for Exams**

Exams performed under the Acuity contract are paid by a national level billing process. The employee is responsible for any cost related to obtaining additional medical testing or information needed to change a medical determination. In rare cases, and when the FWS specifically requests additional exam(s) or information, the local unit will cover the additional cost.

Questions regarding this program should be directed to:

- The appropriate Regional MSP Lead, listed at:  
<https://www.doi.gov/wildlandfire/medical-standards-policy>
- FWS Wildland Fire Safety Program Manager, Eric Fransted, at 208-387-5210 or [edward\\_fransted@fws.gov](mailto:edward_fransted@fws.gov)
- The DOI MSP Customer Service at 1-888-286-2521 or [wlfcsr@blm.gov](mailto:wlfcsr@blm.gov)
- Acuity Customer Service (for portal/access issues) at 888-636-8619 (option 2) or [wfff@chsmedical.com](mailto:wfff@chsmedical.com)

cc:

Regional Chiefs, National Wildlife Refuge System  
Chief, Division of Natural Resources  
Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System  
Chief, Division of Human Capital  
Regional Wildland Firefighter MSP Leads  
Staff, Branch of Fire Management  
JAO Division of Human Resource Operations: Personal Security  
Chief, Division of Refuge Law Enforcement