



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

March 24, 2020

DOI WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM INTERIM POLICY MEMORANDUM No. 2020-005

From: Jeffrey Rupert - Director, Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: DOI Medical Standards Process During Coronavirus (COVID – 19) Outbreak

Effective Date: March 24, 2020

Expiration Date: December 31, 2020

Purpose: The purpose of this Interim Policy Memorandum is to provide guidance on the Department of the Interior Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program (DOI MSP) process during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Background: In December 2019, a novel (new) coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, People's Republic of China, causing outbreaks of the coronavirus disease COVID-19. The virus has now spread globally. The Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) declared a public health emergency on January 31, 2020, in response to COVID-19. COVID-19 has now reached pandemic level and a national emergency was declared by the President of the United States on March 13, 2020. In response, the DOI has and will continue to implement several measures to support social distancing and other mitigations to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Coordination: Bureau Fire Directors, Bureau Fire Safety Managers and DOI Office of Occupational Safety and Health were consulted in the development of this Interim Policy Memorandum.

Scope: This Policy Memorandum applies to all employees (incumbents and applicants) regardless of employment status and hiring authority, including emergency firefighters (Administratively Determined – AD/casual hires) and collateral duty firefighters who require arduous, moderate or light medical clearance.

Existing Policy Affected: Office of Wildland Fire Policy Memorandum 2016-014

Authority: Authority under Department Manual 485 18; 5 CFR 339 Medical Qualification Determinations; 5 U.S.C. 552a as amended (Privacy Act of 1974); 29 CFR 1630.14 (medical examinations specifically permitted); and 29 CFR 16.14.203 (Rehabilitation Act).

Interim Policy:

- A. The 3-year (36-month) periodicity requirement for all exams expiring in 2020 is extended until December 31, 2020. Firefighters who were previously *Qualified* or *Qualified with Risk Mitigation* or *Waiver* that are due for a periodic exam may choose to complete a self-certification in lieu of completing a periodic exam. Upon expiration of the interim policy firefighters shall come back into compliance with exam periodicity.
 - o All Non-Qualified determinations will still be required to follow the standard risk mitigation/waiver process.
- B. New hires will be required to complete baseline exams. If baseline exams are not possible to complete due to COVID-19 impacts, updated direction will be issued by individual Bureaus.
- C. The Light and Moderate Health Screening Questionnaire Process will remain the same.

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cc: Interior Fire Executives
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