



# NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 S. Development Avenue  
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## MEMORANDUM

Reference: NWCG#021-2009

To: NWCG Executive Board

From: NWCG Chair *Brian McManis*

Date: September 2, 2009

Subject: Interagency Medical Standards Program Agency Separation

Effective with the issuance of this Memorandum, the Interagency Medical Standards Program (IMSP) is being split into two separate programs. The Department of the Interior (DOI) bureaus will coordinate in a joint program, and the US Forest Service (FS) will manage their own program separately.

The DOI bureaus have established the DOI Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program (DOI-MSP), which will be under the direction of the agency Fire Directors. The implementation of the DOI-MSP will be through a collaborative team comprised of Agency Fire Safety Program representatives, a Human Resource representative, Equal Employment Opportunity representative, Employee Relations representative, OPM Public Health representative, and a Program Manager with support staff. The new DOI-MSP will be deployed in the beginning of calendar year 2010 with new policies, guidance, and processes under the authority of the DOI agencies. At that time, the field will again be able to request medical examinations for arduous duty wildland firefighters under a centralized medical examination contract. Cindy Pogue, Human Resource Specialist from the DOI-FIRES Program, has detailed into the DOI-MSP Program Manager position while we recruit and fill the position, and is leading the revisions to the program to meet the deployment timeline for 2010.

The FS is also moving forward to develop their new program. The intent of FS Fire and Aviation Management is to have a transparent, responsive, low-impact process that provides a high level of service to all involved. While it is likely that the Medical Standards themselves won't change, the way the Forest Service responds to an employee not meeting one or more of the Medical Standards will change. A focused and inclusive work group of

representatives from Fire and Aviation Management (FAM) from the Washington Office (WO), Regional and Forest levels, Human Capital Management, WO Civil Rights, and the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) are currently engaged in program design. The final outcome is not known at this time, but the objective is a significantly improved program.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) recognizes the inconvenience program changes and updates have placed on wildland firefighters, Fire Management Officers, Servicing Human Resource Offices, and Line Officers in sustaining a workforce of arduous duty wildland firefighters to respond to fire incidents. However, we firmly believe that the new program will be significantly improved and streamlined, and will better serve its customers. We ask for your patience while the respective programs are reestablished. Given the fact that the programs are now separate and more agency-specific, further guidance on these programs will be forthcoming from individual agencies rather than through NWCG.

Please contact your agency representative if you have specific questions or concerns.

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