United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Fire Management Branch
National Interagency Fire Center
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

March 18, 2009

In Reply Refer To:
93252 (FMB) C012

Instruction Memorandum No. 2009-2
Expires: 12/31/2009

To: Regional Fire Management Coordinators, Regions 1-8

From: for Chief, Branch of Fire Management

Subject: FWS Process for Managing Medical Standards Program Transition Plan

This memorandum provides FWS direction and information on how to implement National Wildfire Coordinating Group's (NWCG) Medical Standards Program Transition Plan memorandum, NWCG# 008-2009 (Refer to: http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/NWCG/NWCG_008-2009_Memo_MSP_Transition_Plan.pdf).

The Fire Management Branch wants to provide a seamless transition between medical services contract providers and to provide FWS units with specific Bureau guidance during this transition period. Our utmost goal is to ensure firefighter safety and health while meeting the needs of the wildland fire program during this period of lapse of firefighter medical exam contract services.

FWS will implement the NWCG Transition Plan in addition to the following Bureau specific process:

- Newly hired personnel in permanent, career seasonal and term positions that require arduous duty for wildland fire who would have received a "Baseline" medical examination under the Interagency Medical Standards Program (IMSP) as a condition of employment:
  - Must pass a medical examination as a condition of employment as per the SF-78 process as established in the NWCG Transition Plan.
  - Must complete the "Baseline" examination as required by IMSP within **60 days** of the new medical services contract being reestablished.

- For firefighter's who receive a medical exam using the SF-78 process, the Servicing Human Resource Officer (SHRO) will provide the following documents to the firefighter to take to their exam or send directly to examining physician:
  - SF-78 (select applicable SF-78 form at: http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/NWCG_transition.htm

- Supplemental form Physical Requirements for Firefighters and Smokejumper Positions. Refer to: http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/NWCG/1400-108.pdf
- FWS Cover Letter to Physicians. Refer to: http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/FWS.htm
- Essential Functions and Work Conditions for Wildland Firefighters. Refer to: http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/NWCG/essential_functions_arduous_fftr.pdf
- *Completed* Health Screen Questionnaire (HSQ). Refer to: http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/NWCG/OMB%200596_0164_HSQ.pdf

- Firefighters that receive "Limiting Conditions" noted on the SF-78 from their examining physician will not be eligible to participate in the WCT and thus not participate in wildland firefighting at the arduous level. These firefighters will be required to participate in the Interagency Medical Standards Program when the new medical exam contract for services is available.

- The SHRO will notify the respective FMO of individual firefighter clearance or non-clearance status based upon examining physician's findings as noted on the SF-78.

- Firefighters that answer "No" to all questions on the HSQ will retain one copy of the HSQ, provide the original copy to the SHRO, and provide one copy to the Work Capacity Test (WCT) Administrator prior to the WCT.

- A matrix, Medical Examination Requirements During Lapse in Medical Contract Service, is provided to further describe the medical examination requirements based on employment category. Refer to http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/NWCG/Final_Exam_Type_Matrix.pdf

- The SHRO will retain all HSQs and exam forms in the employee's Medical File. AD/EFF records shall be kept at the local hiring unit following records security protocols.

- The preferred method of obtaining medical exam services is through the utilization of local unit Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) with local medical clinics. If this preferred method is not an option, firefighters may select a physician of their choice. Iin either case the firefighter will be responsible for requesting the exam. Payment method will be established by the local unit (e.g., Government purchase card / convenience check). If additional testing is needed beyond the customary examination, the costs will be assumed by the examinee.

- Exam costs will be paid for by the Fire Management Branch using accounting code 93252-9131-MSXM-2A.

- Use the Firefighter Medical Examination Log for exam tracking and cost accountability. (Refer to: http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/NWCG/MedStandardswksht.pdf) This log shall be submitted to Michael Smith by September 1, 2009.

When the new firefighter medical exam contract for services is available, the protocols of the Interagency Medical Standards Program will be resumed.

For more information, please refer to the Interagency Medical Standards Program website at: http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/NWCG_transition.htm

For questions or more information please contact Michael Smith, Assistant Fire Operations and Safety Specialist at 208-387-5831 or Michael_J_Smith@fws.gov.

cc:

Regional Chiefs
Chief, Division of Natural Resources
Human Resources Officer, Human Resources Branch, Division of Human Capital