



## DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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March 25, 2020

## All Hired Equipment Suppliers / Operators:

Due to the restrictions in effect from the COVID-19/Corona Virus mandates, CAL FIRE recognizes that many suppliers are unable to obtain the annual Fireline Safety Awareness for Hired Vendors card required for the 2020 fire season. To alleviate this issue, CAL FIRE is temporarily making allowances for suppliers and/or equipment operators, as described below:

1. Suppliers and/or equipment operators with a current 2020 Fireline Safety Awareness Card will be required to provide proof to their Hired Equipment Coordinator and/or CAL FIRE incident personnel upon request.
2. Suppliers and/or equipment operators with a 2019 Fireline Safety Awareness Card who are unable to obtain a current 2020 Fireline Safety Awareness Card will be given an extension for one year from date of issue. 2019 cards must be shown to Hired Equipment Coordinators and/or CAL FIRE incident personnel upon request.
3. Suppliers and/or equipment operators without proof of a valid 2019 Fireline Safety Awareness Card, or who have not taken the Fireline Safety Awareness for Hired Vendors class will **not** be given an exception and **will not be hired** until such time that the training is completed.

When the COVID-19/Corona Virus restrictions are lifted, or amended such that the course becomes available again, new suppliers and/or equipment operators, or existing suppliers and/or equipment operators who were unable to provide a valid 2019 Fireline Safety Awareness Card will be required to attend this training. Proof of completion and a valid 2020 Fireline Safety Awareness Card will be required to be provided to their Hired Equipment Coordinator before being ordered for an emergency assignment.

Suppliers and/or equipment operators with a valid 2019 Fireline Safety Awareness Card should take the 2020 class as soon as they are able.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact your appropriate Hired Equipment Coordinator.

Kevin Guerrero  
Staff Chief – Fire Protection Operations  
Sacramento Headquarters  
CAL FIRE



**File Code:** 5100  
**Route To:**

**Date:** MAR 24 2020

**Subject:** Adjustments to wildland fire preparedness activities for the 2020 fire year in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

**To:** Regional Fire Directors

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service adopts the attached Fire Management Board's memo as operational guidance for 2020. This applies to current and returning employees, transfer employees from other federal agencies, and administratively determined and contracted resources.

Fire refresher training (RT-130), is extended for thirteen months from the date of employees' 2019 certification.

Work capacity tests are waived for current employees. However, everyone is required to complete the health screening questionnaire as referenced in the attached memo to receive a temporary medical clearance for 2020. Temporary medical clearances for the work capacity test will be valid for thirteen months from the employee's 2019 date of clearance. If an answer given on the health screening questionnaire indicates the need to take an OF-178 medical exam, please visit the Forest service eMedical website for further instructions: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managingland/fire/safety/emedical>. Instructions are located in the *March, 2020 USFS OF-178 Exam Guidance*.

In addition, the agency suspends requirements for prescribed fire burn boss refresher training (RT-300) through December 31, 2020.

Instructors are strongly encouraged to deliver training utilizing virtual technology as an interim mitigation measure. A copy of this letter and the attached memo shall be placed in employees' training files. Please direct training and qualifications questions to Jim Shultz, Acting Branch Chief, Fire and Aviation Management Training at [jim\\_shultz@nps.gov](mailto:jim_shultz@nps.gov), or by phone at (208) 387-5215. Medical standards questions should be directed to the eMedical staff at [SM.FS.MQP\\_emedical@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.MQP_emedical@usda.gov).

SHAWNA A. LEGARZA, PSYD  
Director Fire and Aviation Mgt

Enclosure

cc: Bill Hahnenberg, Mark Lichtenstein, Denise Blankenship, Clint Cross, Frank Guzman, Jim Shultz,  
Regional Training Officers







## Fire Management Board

FIRE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FMB Memorandum No. 20-001

21 March 2020

TO: Fire Management Board Members

FROM: Leon Ben Jr., Chair, Fire Management Board

SUBJECT: Adjustments to Wildland Fire Preparedness Activities for the 2020 Fire Year in response to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

The purpose of this memo is to provide the interagency wildland fire community with guidance on adjustments to wildland fire preparedness activities for the 2020 Fire Year. These activities include: Medical Clearance, Work Capacity Test (WCT), and RT-130, Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher (WFSTAR).

The Fire Management Board (FMB) has carefully analyzed the risk of responder exposure to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in relationship to the need to evaluate the medical, physical, and training requirements of wildland firefighters as part of annual fire management preparedness. We distinguished requirements into two categories: 1) Employees new to the federal firefighting workforce, and 2) Incumbent/returning firefighters and firefighters who have transferred from one federal Bureau to another. To this end, the following alternatives will be implemented effective immediately. Agencies may elect more stringent direction if deemed prudent.

### **Employees New to the Federal Firefighting Workforce**

- Medical Clearance: Obtain clearance through standard agency onboarding process.
  - DOI Agencies: 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 agencies.
  - USFS: Effective immediately, any employee with responses on the eMedical Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ) that indicates that they must be cleared to the WCT by OF-178 Exam will temporarily not be required to complete a new OF-178 exam. Any employee who would normally complete an OF-178 exam will be directed by their unit HSQ Coordinator to provide the USFS Medical Qualifications Office with additional information in order to obtain a temporary medical clearance to the WCT for 2020.
- Work Capacity Test (WCT): Required to complete any related light, moderate, or arduous work capacity test.
  - Discourage reuse or sharing of pack test vests.
  - Encourage use of weight appropriate bladder bags or individually issued fireline packs.
- Basic Firefighter Training: Required to complete S-130, Firefighter Training; S-190, Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior; L-180, Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service; IS-700, An Introduction to the National Incident Management System; and ICS-100, Introduction to the Incident Command System, and fire shelter proficiency training. The fire shelter training should be implemented using a standard fire shelter that no longer meets service parameters or a practice fire shelter as a one-person, one-time use.

### **Incumbent/Returning Firefighters/Transferred Federal Firefighters**

- Medical Clearance: Required to complete a self-certification through their agency medical standards program.
  - DOI Agencies:
    - The 3-year (36-month) periodicity requirement for all DOI 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.
    - All DOI non-qualified determinations will be required to follow the standard risk mitigation/waiver/review process. You must have been qualified via a risk mitigation, waiver or medical officer review and be considered medically qualified before functioning in an arduous capacity.
  - USFS:
    - Effective immediately, any employee with responses on the eMedical Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ) that indicates that they must be cleared to the WCT by OF-178 Exam will temporarily not be required to complete a new OF-178 exam. Any employee who would normally complete an OF-178 exam will be directed by their unit HSQ Coordinator to provide the USFS Medical Qualifications Office with additional information in order to obtain a temporary medical clearance to the WCT for 2020.
- Work Capacity Tests (WCTs) are suspended for 2020. Employees will provide the local Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) account manager proof of medical clearance. Upon receipt of proof of medical clearance, the IQCS account manager will input a WCT competency based on the previously attained 2019 level (light, moderate or arduous). IQCS account managers will include appropriate documentation in the employees training record.
- RT-130, Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher (WFSTAR): Employees who have not completed RT-130 to date will be awarded the RT-130 competency. The competency will be awarded from their current expiration date identified in IQCS. This action will be implemented nationally through the agency's National Training Officer. The following actions are recommended in lieu of the formal training:
  - Complete a self-study refresher utilizing the WFSTAR videos and support materials. Employees should include topics that focus on entrapment avoidance and related case studies, current issues, and other hazards and safety issues.  
(<https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/rt-130/wfstar-catalog>).
  - To compensate for the hands-on fire shelter training, employees are encouraged to watch the "New Generation Fire Shelter" video (<https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/fire-shelter-and-personal-protective-equipment-subcommittee>).
  - Predicted service information (<https://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/predictive.htm>)
  - Utilize content from the Lesson Learned Center (<https://www.wildfirelessons.net/home>).

These exceptions apply to all Administratively Determined (AD) employees as well as applicable crew, water handling (engines and water tenders), and equipment contracts and agreements.

**Background:** Many wildland fire position qualifications require the completion of the RT-130, medical exam, and WCT. Based on the current situation and guidance related to COVID-19, the goal is to reduce impact and exposure to our employees while maintaining our ability to respond to incidents and carry out mission critical wildland fire activities.

**Distribution:**

Frank Guzman, Chair, National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)

Josh Simmons, Chair, National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC)

Shawna Legarza, USFS National Director of Fire and Aviation Management

Jeff Rupert, Director, Office of Wildland Fire (OWF)