



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Washington, DC 20240

Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors
Attention: All Agency Superintendents
All Regional and Local Unit Fire Management Officers
Branch of Wildland Fire Management

Through: Deputy Bureau Director, Field Operations

From: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Subject: Updated Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Wildland Fire Boot Stipend

Purpose: This memorandum updates guidance and direction provided in the Office of Wildland Fire Coordination's (now Office of Wildland Fire) Policy Memorandum 2021-004, Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend, (Attachment 1).

Background: The Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book) outlines the wildland fire boot standard for safe and efficient use on the fireline:

“Personnel assigned to wildland fires must wear a minimum of 8-inch high, lace-type exterior leather work boots with lug melt-resistant soles. The 8-inch height requirement is measured from the bottom of the boot's heel to the top of the boot. Alaska is exempt from the lug sole requirement. All boots that meet the wildland fire boot standard as described above are required for firefighting and fireline visits, considered non-specialized PPE, and will be purchased by the employee (including AD/EFF) prior to employment.”

This footwear is considered field attire and is required for all personnel participating in operational activities relating to wildland fire and fuels management activities. Appropriate boots are a condition of employment for firefighting positions, and boots must be purchased by the employee prior to employment.

Policy: The Department of the Interior authorizes payment of a \$167.00 stipend per fiscal year to employees holding a valid¹ Incident Qualification Card with a fitness rating of moderate or arduous, and who, as a condition of employment, are required to purchase boots that satisfy the NWCG Wildland Fire Boot Standard.

¹ Validity of the Red Card is determined by the Fitness Expiration Date, located in the upper right hand corner of the card.

Personnel hired under the Administratively Determined (AD) hiring authority who qualify may receive the stipend at time of payment following their first fire assignment in an Incident Qualification and Certification System (IQCS) qualified position requiring a moderate or arduous fitness rating in each fiscal year.²

DOI bureaus and offices will follow established payment processes to track and disburse stipends. For all qualified employees, AD employees or for non-fire bureaus that have an incident response (fire suppression) agreement with OWF, payment of the stipend should be charged to the appropriate sub-activity (e.g., preparedness, fuels management, or suppression).

Employees who have already applied or received the yearly boot stipend are encouraged to make another claim to be paid the full stipend amount for this fiscal year.

Funding: The Branch of Wildland Fire Management will not provide funding for this mandate. Rather, they encourage Fire Management Officers (FMO), managers, and Agency Administrators to manage the number of administratively determined and militia employees, commensurate with regional and local unit expectations for the upcoming fire season.

Bureau Employees: Agencies will use Preparedness funds to compensate bureau employees who meet the criteria. Agencies will monitor all personnel, and the amount spent during each CY to report information should to the Regional/National Office. This information includes:

- Full Name
- Employee Identification Number in IQCS (EmplID)
- IQCS Qualification

The \$167.00 boot stipend is considered a fringe benefit and is taxable. It will be added as “Gross Pay” on bureau employees “Leave and Earnings Statement.”

Bureau employees should complete annual stipends as early as possible each year. To claim the annual stipend, units will work with their local and regional budget personnel to process payments. Each employee must complete the SF-1034 Form: (<https://www.gsa.gov/forms-library/public-voucher-purchases-and-services-other-personal>) “Public Voucher for Purchases and Services other than Personal”, and submit the form to the Reston Accounting Operations Division (IA_Special_Payments@bia.gov). A notification of payment will not be sent. Please refer to your Leave and Earnings statement for confirmation of reimbursement.

Tribal Employees: Tribal organizations that choose to participate in the annual stipend with employees meeting the requirements for arduous and moderate firefighters are encouraged to document information and submit to the local unit FMO for tracking purposes for upward reporting.

Administratively Determined (AD) Employees: Employees hired under the AD hiring authority who meet the qualifications outlined above and have a valid Red Card are eligible for the annual stipend. To qualify, the agency must hire an AD employee in one of the positions identified in

² The PMS 3 10-1, National Incident Management System: Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide 09/30/2020 (attachment 02) identifies IQ CS positions and associated fitness requirements.

Attachment 2 (designated in block 6 “Firefighter Classification” on the Emergency Firefighter Time Report (OF-288)). Payment to this workforce through suppression funds or hazardous fuel accounts will follow completion of the first wildland fire/fuels management assignment in each calendar year. Payment will be automatically processed by the Casual Payment Center (CPC) without requiring additional information from the employee/hiring official.

Hazardous Fuels Employees: Permanent, career seasonal and temporary personnel who are hired specifically for the fuels management program, where planned funding is at least 80% of their duties, are entitled to the annual stipend. A tribe/agency will use programmatic or project funds to compensate these employees.

The boot stipend for AD employee’s funded exclusively by fuels management funds will be paid by project funds unless they have not been provided a boot stipend in the applicable year following their first wildland fire assignment. Payment will be automatically processed by the CPC without requiring further information from the employee/hiring official.

Timeframe: This policy and direction becomes effective December 1, 2022, and applies until modified or rescinded.

Contact: Michael Nutter, Budget Director, at michael.nutter@bia.gov for more information or questions.

Attachment 1 - OWFC Policy Memorandum 2011-2

Attachment 2 - PMS 310-1, National Incident Management System: Wildland Fire Qualifications System Guide_2020

Attachment 3 - SF-1034, Public Voucher for Purchases and Services other than Personal (Example)