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Route To:

Subject: Revised Work Capacity Test Implementation Guide

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, IITF Director, Station Director, NE

The Forest Service administers the Work Capacity Test (WCT) for current or prospective employees to determine physical fitness for wildland firefighting activities. The policy and procedures for administering the WCT are in the *Work Capacity Tests for Wildland Fire Qualifications -- Implementation Guide* (Guide). Effective immediately, the revised Guide, dated December 13, 2007, is the official Forest Service direction. This replaces all previous versions of the Guide.

The major factor leading to this revised guide was the centralization of Forest Service human resource functions in Albuquerque. Prior to the centralization of human resources, specialists in the field reviewed these forms and, based on an employee's or selectee's self-assessment of specific health factors, determined if a physical examination was required. In the current environment, each unit (e.g., Forest or Station) will now designate a Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ) Coordinator and an Alternate to initiate and review completed forms at the local level. The Albuquerque Service Center – Human Capital Management (ASC-HCM) will continue to review physical exam information when a completed HSQ form indicates that a physical exam is needed. The Guide spells out the specific procedures.

It is important that units quickly designate an HSQ Coordinator and Alternate and share their contact information with ASC-HCM. Designated HSQ Coordinators and Alternates must thoroughly familiarize themselves with the contents of the revised Guide. Together, Washington Office Fire and ASC-HCM will work with regional, station, and unit Fire Management officials to ensure that HSQ forms are being properly reviewed and handled.

It is important to note that unit HSQ Coordinators and Alternates **must** sign the Confidentiality form in the Guide **before** receiving any HSQs. HSQs contain private medical information that must be maintained in a secure and confidential manner.

Several different staffs, including Human Capital Management and the Fire Operations Risk Management Council, as well as the National Federation of Federal Employees-Forest Service Council, produced and finalized the revised Guide. These groups and others will ensure that work capacity testing continues to be safely and effectively implemented across the Forest Service. Units with American Federation of Government Employees and National Association of Government Employees unions should promptly notify local union officials about the changes to provide an opportunity for local impact and implementation negotiations, preferably in partnership.



Some units have already sent HSQ forms for the upcoming fire season to the ASC-HCM for processing. We have asked the ASC-HCM to return these forms to the units so that they can follow the procedures in the new Guide. Although this will cause delays in finalizing HSQ results in some cases, it was felt that less confusion would result if we use only a single procedure for processing these forms at any given time.

Information about work capacity testing and the HSQ, including the new Guide and forms related to health screening, is found at http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/wct/wct_index.html. Please note that effective immediately, as part of the new Guide's release, a single HSQ form is valid for all Forest Service personnel and prospective AD employees. That form [FS-5100-31 (Rev 8/2006) or OMB 0596-0164 (Expires 8/2009)] has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget.

Contact Larry Sutton, Fire Operations Risk Management Officer, at 208-387-5970 or lsutton@fs.fed.us, with questions about the new Guide or HSQ form. The designated point of contact at the ASC-HCM for HSQ coordinators about the processing of Health Screening Questionnaires is Emily Bergener at 505-563-9272 or ebergener@fs.fed.us. Labor relations questions should be directed to Gary Samaha at 404-347-2985 or gsamaha@fs.fed.us.

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