



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Fire Management Program Center
3833 S. Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

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April 29, 2013

Memorandum

To: Regional Fire Management Officers

From: Branch Chief, Wildland Fire /s/ **William Kaage**

Subject: 2013 Wildland Fire Boot Stipend Guidance: Implementation of DOI Office of Wildland Fire Policy Memorandum 2011-2

This memorandum provides eligibility requirements and payment procedures for the Wildland Fire Boot Stipend. It supersedes the memorandum from the Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection dated April 30, 2012, attached.

Specific changes for 2013 are: 1) Update of Table 1 reflecting current account numbers; 2) Regions and/or parks no longer need to directly track wildland fire boot stipend expenditures, as they are accounted for in the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS); 3) Casual hires no longer need to fill out form A-18, Report of Taxable Fringe Benefits; 4) Language has been added regarding labor and employee relations.

Effective January 1, 2012, the payment of a one-hundred dollar (\$100) annual stipend was authorized for employees holding a valid Incident Qualification Card with a fitness rating of moderate or arduous. Validity of the card is determined by the fitness expiration date on the card. The boot stipend is considered a fringe benefit, is taxable, and is processed through payroll. NPS units will need to track who receives the boot stipend each fiscal year so that duplicate payments are not made. All requests for the stipend must be submitted no later than September 1st of each year.

Prior to entering on duty or performing moderate or arduous duty operations, employees are expected to purchase a pair of boots meeting the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standard found in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Guide*.

While purchasing a pair of boots meeting the NWCG standard is not a condition of employment for militia firefighters, it is a condition of performing in positions requiring a fitness rating of moderate or arduous. Therefore, militia firefighters are also entitled to the \$100 per year stipend if they participate or respond to an incident requiring arduous or moderate fitness.

All permanent full-time, term, career seasonal, and temporary employees should work with their Fire Management Office to complete Form A-18, Report of Taxable Fringe Benefits (attached). Once completed, Form A-18 should be submitted to the Servicing Human Resource Office for processing in the payroll system.

Direction on where to charge the costs of the boot stipend for fire funded, militia, and Administratively Determined (AD) employees is found in Table 1 below. Form A-18 does **not** need to be completed for NPS casual employees to receive the annual boot stipend nor does the boot stipend need to be tracked at the field level for NPS casual employees – the boot stipend will be automatically processed and tracked through the DOI Casual Payment Center (CPC).

Once an OF-288 is received, the CPC will determine if the casual employee:

- was working in an arduous or moderate position as listed on the AD Pay Plan position matrix;
- was working on a qualifying fire assignment: suppression, emergency stabilization, severity, step-up, hazardous fuels projects; and
- has not yet received the annual boot stipend.

Once those three requirements have been met as determined by the CPC, the CPC will then charge the boot stipend to the first qualifying incident cost code (to suppression, emergency stabilization, severity, step-up, or Rx projects). The annual boot stipend of \$100 will be entered as a commissary item with a negative value on the OF-288 that is processed after their first fire incident requiring either a moderate or arduous fitness level and will be charged to the appropriate account as outlined in Table 1. The DOI Casual Payment Center will add the stipend to the casual employee’s payment as a taxable reimbursable, track the entry to eliminate duplicate reimbursements, and send the casual a Wage and Earnings Statement.

Fire Management Officers should manage the number of militia and casual employees with moderate and arduous fitness ratings in accordance with local need. While the funds for these employees’ boot stipends is not coming out of the park’s wildland fire position support funding, this disbursement will affect the overall amount of funding available to the field.

Table 1: Directions on Where to Charge \$100 Boot Stipend

Type of Employee	First Assignment is a Prescribed Burn Project	First Assignment is an Incident
Militia (i.e. ONPS-funded)	No specialized account required in 2013. Charge to appropriate project.	WBS: PF.FSFBMF000.00.1
AD	No specialized account required in 2013. Charge to appropriate project.	WBS: PF.FSFBMF000.00.1
Wildland Fire-funded	The \$100 stipend will be paid for out of the park or central office's support funding. Wildland fire-funded employees do not have to respond to an incident before being eligible for the stipend.	

To the extent this constitutes a change in working conditions, the change is considered minimal or diminimus by the agency. However, please provide a copy of this memorandum to any local unions representing employees who may be affected prior to implementing the change. If you receive a request to bargain over the change, please contact David Davies, Chief, Division of Labor and Employee Relations, at (202) 354-1969 or (Dave.Davies@nps.gov)

Questions regarding this program should be directed to Wildland Fire Safety Program Manager, Chad Fisher, at 208-387-5967 (Chad_Fisher@nps.gov) or National Incident Business Manager, Christine Peters, at (208) 407-6558 (Christine_Peters@nps.gov).

Attachments

cc: Division Chief, Fire and Aviation Management
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