



# United States Department of the Interior

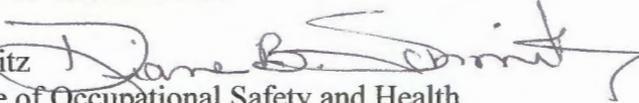
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

JUL 02 2014



## Memorandum

To: James Douglas  
Director, Office of Wildland Fire

From: Diane B. Schmitz   
Director, Office of Occupational Safety and Health

Subject: Variance of Departmental Manual, Chapter 16, *Motor Vehicle Safety* requirement that CDL drivers be at least 21 years of age to operate wildland firefighting vehicles.

Currently 485 Departmental Manual (DM) Chapter 16, *Motor Vehicle Safety*, requires Bureaus to establish requirements for the safe operation of motor vehicles with more stringent requirements for operators of commercial motor vehicles. The wildland firefighting community frequently has a need to utilize Commercial Driver's License (CDL) operators that are at least 18 years of age but do not always meet the "be at least 21 years of age" requirement in DM 16. The 21 years of age requirement applies to CDL drivers that are operating motor vehicles that have either a gross vehicle weight (GVW) rating of more than 26,000 pounds, is towing a vehicle with a 10,000 pound or more GVW rating, hauling hazardous material requiring the vehicle to be placarded, or is operating a vehicle designed to transport 15 or more people including the driver.

The DOI wildland firefighting community requested a variance of the requirement that drivers of wildland firefighting vehicles who possess a valid CDL must be at least 21 years of age.

This requested variance is granted for drivers between the ages of 18 and 21 years for a minimum period through the end of the FY 2015 fire season. This variance will be temporary until the DOI Safety Management Information System motor vehicle accident data can be reviewed before a decision to permanently waive this requirement is considered. The conditions of the variance are as follows:

1. Drivers with a CDL may only drive within the state that has issued the CDL and must comply with that state's special requirements and endorsements.
2. Supervisors must annually establish and document that these drivers have a valid license (i.e. that the license has not been suspended, revoked, canceled, or that he/she has not been otherwise disqualified from holding a license - 485 DM 16.3.8 (1)), ensure that the employee has the ability to operate the vehicle(s) safely in the operational environment assigned (485 DM 16.3.B (2)), and review and validate the employee's driving record (485 DM 16.3.8 (4))

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Schmitz, Director, Office of Occupational Safety and Health at [Diane\\_Schmitz@nps.gov](mailto:Diane_Schmitz@nps.gov) or 208-219-0189.