



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

## DOI WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM POLICY MEMORANDUM No. 2021-004

To: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Director, Bureau of Land Management  
Director, National Park Service  
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation  
Director, U.S. Geological Survey

From: Jeffery R. Rupert, Director - Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Policy Memorandum (PM) is to provide Departmental guidance on the increase for the yearly stipend provided to employees for wildland fire boots.

**Scope:** This PM applies to the Department of the Interior's bureaus and offices participating in wildland fire management (WFM) activities.

**Timeframe:** This PM is effective immediately and remains in effect until rescinded or modified.

**Background:** In 2011, Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy 2011-2 Wildland Fire Boot Stipend was issued allowing a \$100.00 per year stipend to qualified firefighters. The cost to repair or purchase appropriate boots has increased over the past ten years.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) establishes wildland fire standards for use by the bureaus, and the NWCG Wildland Fire Boot standard has been adopted by each bureau as appropriate for safe work on the fireline.

The DOI fire bureaus have concluded that protective footwear is considered non-specialized personal protective equipment (PPE), is personal in nature and can be used by employees off the job site. Therefore, appropriate boots are a condition of employment for firefighting positions, and boots must be purchased by the employee prior to employment.

**Coordination:** Subject matter experts, Bureau Operations Specialists, and Fire Directors were consulted in the development of this PM.

**Existing Policy Affected:** This PM replaces OWF Policy Memorandum 2011-2, "Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend", dated October 14, 2011.

**Authority:** Authority under Departmental Manual 112 DM 7.

**Policy:** DOI authorizes payment of a \$167.00 stipend per fiscal year to employees holding a valid<sup>1</sup> 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.

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.

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.

**Contact:** Questions can be directed to Erin Horsburgh, Deputy Director, Management and Programs, Office of Wildland Fire at [erin\\_horsburgh@ios.doi.gov](mailto:erin_horsburgh@ios.doi.gov) or 208-334-1550; or Kim Van Hemelryck, Operations Program Lead, at [kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov) or 208-334-1552.

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<sup>1</sup> Validity of the Incident Qualification Card is determined by the Fitness Expiration date on the card.