

Program FAQ's

What are medical standards and who do they apply to?

The medical standards apply only to arduous duty wildland firefighting positions as described in PMS 310-1. Specific medical standards are required because of the arduous and hazardous nature of the job, in addition to providing a means of tracking occupational health relative to acute and chronic exposure to the wildland firefighter environment. The information gathered will assist the agencies in improving their fire safety programs and their commitment to maintain a high degree of responsibility toward public and firefighter safety.

Are the medical standards the same as the fitness test for arduous duty known as the work capacity or pack test?

No. You must have a certificate of qualification letter from CHSi stating that you meet the medical standards for arduous duty before you can participate in the arduous duty Work Capacity Test (pack test). Certificates of qualification can be printed out through the EAS system or your CAS user (FMO or SHRO - Servicing Human Resource Office), can print this out for you.

How often are medical exams required (what's the periodicity)?

All positions considered arduous must take an exam every three years and self-certify in the years between as a condition of employment. The self-certification process will take place in the EAS system.

What unique identification number do I use to input firefighters in CAS?

Use the examinees' social security number. Once entered into the CAS system, the social security number is defaulted to the last four and protected per Privacy Act and contract requirements.

Where do I go for my medical examination and how do I get paperwork?

Your local FMO or SHRO will request your exam through CHSi. CHSi will then be emailing, mailing or faxing your exam directly to the clinic. You will need to fill out a questionnaire online in the EAS System. CHSi will contact you once an exam has been requested. If you do not have an email address, you will need to contact your FMO for further information.

How can I make the process as smooth as possible?

- Be responsive to CHSi's contact attempts.
- Be flexible with appointment dates and times.
- Don't miss the appointment.

What do I need to bring to the exam?

Bring supporting medical records or documentation for anything you mark "yes" to on the questionnaire as well as information on any medical issues have or medications you are taking.

Examples:

- If you have had recent surgery or procedure, (within the last year), bring information from your provider that indicates you are fully recovered and can perform the essential functions of an arduous duty wildland firefighter. (Arduous Duties link can be found on this website on the homepage).
- If you are diabetic, you can visit your own provider before the exam and have that individual complete the Diabetes Worksheet. This form can be submitted with your exam results by the

clinic to CHSi for review. The CHSi reviewing medical officer will be able to determine if your condition is static and stable.

Why might I be driving by one clinic to go to another clinic that is further?

There are several possible reasons:

- The closer clinic cannot perform all of the exam requirements
- The closer clinic has refused to contract with CHSi
- There are no available appointments at the closer clinic

If you have clinic suggestions please provide that clinic's information to DOI MSP: wlfcsr@blm.gov or 888-286-2521. CHSi will attempt to include that clinic in their network.

How long does it take from the time of exam to a qualification determination?

A Determination will be made within 10 business days of the medical exam. There are exceptions if a blood specimen clots or tests need to be repeated. Please allow plenty of time and request your exam early.

What happens in the event of a missed appointment?

Please contact CHSi and reschedule if you cannot make it! Please call CHSi customer service at 1-888-636-8619, to let them know and reschedule. Please call AT LEAST 24 hours if you know in advance, or as soon as possible if it is an emergency situation that prevents you from keeping your appointment.

What if I have concerns/issues with clinic quality?

Please contact: wlfcsr@blm.gov to express your concerns.

How will I know the outcome of my exam?

The Qualification Determination letter is the official letter clearly indicating your medical qualification (Qualified, Qualified with Risk Mitigation/Waiver, Not Qualified or additional information required). The second letter you received is a courtesy letter from CHSi, separate from the DOI MSP process, summarizing your overall health with suggestions for follow-up care which will not be covered by the Government. The courtesy letter does not affect your determination qualification.

I was determined Not Qualified. What is the next step?

Participate in the Risk Mitigation/Waiver Process and/or if you disagree with your qualification, provide additional information for Reviewing Medical Officer Review that could potentially change your qualification. -Information on and help with the Risk Mitigation/Waiver Process can be found here: https://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards or by calling 888-286-2521. -A request for Reviewing Medical Officer (RMO) review can also be obtained using the contact information above. An RMO review can be requested at any time during the DOI MSP process if an individual feels they have additional medical information that could change their qualification determination. The DOI MSP can help guide you on the type of information that will be helpful.

I have concerns about the non-qualification determination I received from CHS, who do I contact to report this to?

Call your FMO or SHRO. If further questions remain please have the FMO or SHRO call or email the DOI MSP Customer Service Representative at 888-286-2521 or email them at wlfcsr@blm.gov to request a RMO Review.

How can I request a copy of my exam?

Request a copy of the exam through Email to CHSi at: wlff@chsmedical.com or call CHSi 1-888-636-8619. -Employee should email from the account provided at registration to ensure valid identity.

-CHSi will send a reply email with an encrypted link that will allow them to securely access their medical exam results. -If you do not have an email, you can request a hard copy mailed to your address on file in CAS.

Why does one person get Qualified while another doesn't and they have the same issue?

Given the variations in which a condition may present in different individuals (i.e. severity, aerobic capacity, medications and doses, triggers), each case is reviewed independently with consideration of all the medical information available from the examination and from the examinee's personal health care provider.

Risk Mitigation/Waiver and RMO FAQ's

What is the difference between Risk Mitigation and a Waiver?

A Risk Mitigation would place specific requirements on the WLFF to reduce the risk(s) associated with the non-clearance medical conditions. These mitigations will be identified in the Interactive Assessment Process with you, the FMO and SHRO.

A Waiver would waive the Federal Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards. This option would require the WLFF to establish that the non-qualified medical conditions does not interfere or pose a safety risk with the essential functions of the job. It is important to stress that these are proposed and specialized mitigations should be developed on a case by case basis during the Interactive Risk Assessment Process.

The Risk Mitigation/Waivers are done by the agency. You will need to contact your FMO or Servicing Human Resource Office.

What if I have a pre-existing Risk Mitigation/Waiver on file?

All existing Risk Mitigation/Waivers were provided to CHS during contract initiation. Upon review of your examination the Reviewing Medical Officer will determine any changes in your medical condition that could impact your Risk Mitigation/Waiver. If there are no changes that impact your existing Risk Mitigation/Waiver, you will be Qualified with Risk Mitigation/Waiver and your Risk Mitigation/Waiver will remain in place UNLESS there are changes in your health status. If there are changes in your medical condition, you will be Not Qualified and your Risk Mitigation/Waiver will be reviewed.

I just received a Not Qualified letter and I want to start the Risk Mitigation/Waiver process.

Bring your Not Qualified determination letter to your FMO or SHRO (Servicing Human Resource Office) and you will receive an Opportunity Memo from your SHRO with complete instructions on how to participate in the Risk Mitigation / Waiver Process. Upon receiving the Opportunity Memo you will have 5 calendar days to submit your response back to your SHRO. Please refer WLFF Toolbox on the left side of our homepage for further information.

I have additional medical information that may change my qualification from Not Qualified to Qualified. What should I do?

If you are submitting additional information for an RMO Review, gather all medical records that show the current status of your medical condition as well as any tests or information from your doctor. Unless

you obtain prior approval from your agency, all follow up testing/labs/other or Doctor visits will be paid for by the individual.

Please call or email the DOI MSP Customer Service Representative at 888-286-2521 or wiffcsr@blm.gov to request a RMO Review. You will be required to send the DOI MSP an RMO Review Request form found here our website; RMO/Consult Review Request.

What will the Interactive Risk Assessment Process evaluate?

The Interactive Risk Assessment Process will evaluate the following:

- Medical conditions and ability to safely and efficiently perform the tasks
- Qualifications, Experience and Training
- Medical Conditions is Static and Stable
- Conditions of Employment
- Body Stature and PPE

Please refer to the DOI MSP website at http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/ under job aids for a complete guide. There are strict timelines that must be followed in the Risk Mitigation / Waiver Process.

Who makes the final decision in the Risk Mitigation/Waiver Process?

In both the 1st level and 2nd level of the RM/W Process an agency Management Officer (MO) will make the final decision. The MO is typically the local level Line Officer.