

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354

July 19, 2001

In Reply Refer to:
1400-300 (FC-202) P

EMS Transmission 07/20/01
Instruction Memorandum No. OF&A 2001-022
Expires: 09/30/02

To: State and Center Directors
National Human Resources Management Center, **HR-200**

From: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Subject: Waiver of Mandatory Separation

Program Area: Human Resources Management

Purpose: The Secretary of the Interior has directed Bureau Directors to take certain actions to facilitate recruiting and retaining a highly qualified workforce for fire management. A copy of the Secretary's memorandum is attached.

Policy/Action: The Secretary is authorizing a waiver of mandatory separation of supervisors needed to ensure safe and effective fire management during the fire season. Requests will be routed, through my office, to Bureau Directors for approval. I will review the requests and make recommendations.

Requests from State Offices/Centers must include:

- A statement that the employee is willing to remain in service;
- A statement of facts to establish that his/her retention would be in the public interest;

- Certification that the employee is physically able to safely perform assigned duties; and
- The period for which the exemption is desired.

To facilitate such requests, a form is attached for your use.

Time Frame: This IM is effective on receipt.

Background: The Office of Fire & Aviation is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to the Bureau Directors for approval of requests for waiver of mandatory separation.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: No manual or handbook sections are affected.

Coordination: None

Contact: If you have questions regarding these procedures, contact Jim Knox, OF&A Personnel Officer, at (208) 387-4414.

Signed by:
Larry E. Hamilton
Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Authenticated by:
Pat Lewis
Supervisory Mgmt. Asst.

2 Attachments

Secretary's Memorandum (3 p)
Request Form (2 p)

Distribution:
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THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON

JUNE 22 2001

Memorandum

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management

Director, National Park Service
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

From: Secretary

Subject: National Fire Plan - Recruitment and Retention

I appreciate your efforts to meet one of the greatest challenges we face in fire management – recruiting and retaining a highly qualified workforce. **It** is critical that we hire the personnel we need to accomplish the arduous fire suppression and fuels management tasks for which we are responsible. I want you to increase your collaborative efforts and fully utilize all available authorities to recruit and retain personnel. This is especially important regarding managers and supervisors whose skills are needed to oversee firefighting activities in the most effective and safest manner possible. In this regard, please take the following actions immediately:

Waiver of Mandatory Separation. In accordance with Title 5, U.S.C. Section 8335, waive mandatory separation of super-visors needed to ensure safe and effective fire management during the fire season. Fire Directors should initiate exemption requests for supervisors who are needed for the fire effort, are interested in continued employment, and are subject to mandatory separation in calendar year 2001. Requests will be routed to Bureau Directors for approval, through the Bureau of Land Management's Director, Office of National Wildland Fire and Aviation Policy at the National Interagency Fire Center. The Director will review requests and make recommendations on waivers consistent with existing guidelines that fire suppression activities are conducted as safely as possible. The requests must include the following:

- A. A statement that the employee is willing to remain in service;
- B. A statement of facts to establish that his/heir retention would be in the public interest;
- C. Certification the employee is physically able to safely perform assigned duties; and
- D. The period for which the exemption is desired.

Forward approved requests to the employee's servicing personnel office for inclusion in his/her Official Personnel File.

Attachment 1-1

National Fire Plan Human Resources Advisory Group. Formally charter the National Fire Plan (NFP) Human Resources Advisory Group to provide technical advice, assistance and consultation to Bureau Directors and Fire Directors on recruitment, retention and other human resource management issues related to the fire program. The group should be composed of your senior human resource professionals responsible for central coordination and management of bureau recruitment activities under the National Fire Plan, and a senior representative. from your fire management organizations. The group should focus on developing, recommending, coordinating and implementing workforce staffing and development plans and collaborative recruitment and retention initiatives and procedures, including those described below. Our Office of Wildland Fire Coordinator will charter this group, to be chaired by the Bureau of Land Management's human resources group representative.

Open-Continuous Job Announcements and Multi-Bureau Certificates.

A. Advertise firefighters fire management and associated natural resources job opportunities, for which there is a continuing need, using an open-continuous announcement process. These announcements must be closed when no longer needed to recruit job candidates, but not later than 120 days from the date of this memorandum. The announcements should include cut-off dates for applications to permit certification of eligible candidates to hiring officials at required intervals. The announcements should specify that candidates may be referred **to** and selected by any Department of the Interior employer within the area of referral. The area of referral - normally including all Department of the Interior employers within a broad geographical area - should be determined collaboratively by the employing bureaus through consultation with the NFP Human Resources Advisory Group.

B. Through consultation with the NFP Human Resources Advisory Group, employing bureaus should collaboratively determine the process and procedures for establishing and sharing certificates of eligibles from the open-continuous vacancy announcements.

Recruitment and Retention Incentives. In consultation with the NFP Human Resources Advisory Group, Fire Directors should make wise and effective use of the incentives provided for in Personnel Bulletin No. 0 1 -02, dated April 13, 200 1, subject: Departmental Policy on Recruitment and Relocation Bonuses and Retention Allowance. Requests to authorize these incentives for positions filled under the National Fire Plan must be routed through the Bureau of Land Management's Director, Office of National Wildland Fire and Aviation Policy at the National Interagency Fire Center, as specified in Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget and Finance memorandum, dated April 16, 2001, subject: National Fire Plan - Recruitment Incentives. Emphasis should be placed on recruiting and retaining managers and supervisors, who possess skills needed to effectively and safely oversee **firefighting** and related activities.

In addition, I want your representatives to the National Fire Plan Workforce Strategy Group, being led by the Forest Service, to become fully engaged in long-term workforce planning efforts.

The Office of Personnel Policy staff will be available to assist you, Fire Directors, the N-FP Human Resources Advisory Group and the NFP Workforce Strategy Group in accomplishing these and other actions necessary to reach our goals.

Again, I commend everyone's efforts.

/s/Gale A. Norton

cc:
Fire Directors
Office of Wildland Fire Coordinator

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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354**

Waiver of Mandatory Separation

In accordance with Title 5, U.S.C. Section 8335, the Secretary of the Interior can waive mandatory separation of supervisors needed to ensure safe and effective fire management during the fire season. Fire Directors should initiate exemption requests for supervisors who are needed for the fire effort, are interested in continued employment, and are subject to mandatory separation in calendar year 2001. Requests will be routed to Bureau Directors for approval, **through** the Bureau of Land Management's Director, Office of National Wildland Fire and Aviation Policy at the National Interagency Fire Center. The Director will review requests and make recommendations on waivers consistent with existing guidelines that fire suppression activities are conducted as safely as possible.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND MAINTAIN WITH EMPLOYEES RECORDS:

Last Name	First Name	MI	SSN
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Current Position Title	Mandatory Retirement Date
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STATEMENT THAT EMPLOYEE IS WILLING TO REMAIN IN SERVICE:

Employee's Signature	Date
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**STATEMENT FROM FIRE DIRECTOR OF FACTS TO ESTABLISH THAT
EMPLOYEE'S RETENTION WOULD BE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST:**

**CERTIFICATION THE EMPLOYEE IS PHYSICALLY ABLE TO SAFELY
PERFORM ASSIGNED DUTIES:**

THE PERIOD FOR WHICH THE EXEMPTION IS DESIRED:

State/Center Director's Signature

Date