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Route To:

Subject: Treatment for Traumatic Injuries, Including Burns, on Wildfires and Other Incidents

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director and Deputy Chiefs

This letter supersedes the November 10, 2008, direction and provides agency clarification on how to deal with burn injuries and all work-related injury/illness on wildland fire and other emergency incidents. It also clarifies the role of incident personnel and the role of the Human Resource Management Workers' Compensation (ASC-HRM-WC) Section located at the Albuquerque Service Center.

All work related traumatic injury claims are covered under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) and adjudicated by the Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP). To ensure workers receive immediate medical care when necessary, DOL OWCP allows agencies to authorize initial medical treatment using form CA-16. This form is issued to the medical provider and outlines authorization for treatment and referral for specialized medical services, such as a burn center. When this form is issued properly, the employee is not billed for any work-related treatment. DOL OWCP does not impose limits on the amount of medical expenses for emergency treatment, as long as the charges represent the reasonable and customary fees for the services involved, and the treatment is recommended by a qualified physician.

Information regarding the Forest Service Workers' Compensation Program can be found on the ASC-HRM-WC website (http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/owcp/WorkersComp_index.php). The website includes a Question and Answer section which further explains information on burn injuries and other pertinent issues, the Roles and Responsibility section which includes pocket size injury cards with essential contact information, Supervisory Handbook, and injury quick reference guide. Supplemental direction for Incidents is found in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH) Chapter 10, Section 15, and covers the three primary tasks for incident personnel regarding injuries. These include: (1) Completion of the CA-1 or CA-2; (2) initial authorization of medical treatment using the Form CA-16 or FS-6100-16 in infrequent situations; and (3) timely transmittal of forms and information to ASC-HRM-WC. All claim activity beyond these three items is handled by ASC-HRM-WC rather than incident personnel. Detailed incident processes are summarized in the enclosure.

The referral of an injured employee to a burn center is the responsibility of the treating physician under the authority provided on the CA-16. If the physician does not make the referral, and the injured employee feels strongly otherwise, they should contact ASC-HRM-WC immediately so



they can work with DOL OWCP to get the decision reviewed. Furthermore, the incident should generally result in the injured employee going home as soon as possible so they can exercise their right under FECA to go to their personal physician for further evaluation and obtaining additional referrals if warranted.

Burned employees and their families can access information at the American Burn Association website <http://www.ameriburn.org/> for reference information regarding burns and burn center criteria.

In order to provide the best service, ASC-HRM-WC needs direct contact with the injured worker whenever possible. ASC-HRM-WC personnel serve as the injured worker's single point of contact for advice and liaison to DOL OWCP. If the injured worker is unable to make direct contact with ASC-HRM-WC, incident personnel or the employee's home unit line officer may designate someone via email to act on behalf of the injured worker. The designated acting should be focused on: 1) ensuring contact is made with ASC-HRM-WC; 2) helping facilitate the completion of the CA-1, if not already done by the Incident; and 3) ensuring ASC-HRM-WC personnel understand the wishes of the injured worker.

Our goal is to provide injured workers with quality medical care provided in accordance with the Federal Employees Compensation Act in addition to returning employees to productive work. For additional information regarding this letter, please contact Kirk Powell at (505) 343-5642 or via email at kdpowell@fs.fed.us.

/s/ Barbara L. Cooper (for)
CHARLES L. MYERS
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Enclosure

cc: pdl wo ops hrm hros