



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Alaska Fire Service

2019 EFF Program Review

BLM Alaska Fire Service

Required Medical Exams

2019 was the first year that the Department of the Interior (DOI) required a complete baseline firefighter medical exam for federal arduous duty emergency wildland firefighters (EFF) in Alaska. This has been a requirement for all Emergency Firefighters/Administratively Determined (EFF/AD) full-time federal wildland firefighters in the Lower 48 and federal non-EFF firefighters in Alaska for several years. The results of the 2019 Alaska EFF baseline medical exams are as follows:

- 460 EFF medical exams were requested.
- 436 individual EFF responders attended medical exams.
- 325 individual EFF responders were medically qualified.
- 112 of those 325 individuals were granted waivers.
- 111 individuals did not qualify.

Type 2 BLM (federal) crews assigned

Due to several factors, the number of qualified and available EFF responders was relatively low in 2019 for the BLM zones. Better paying jobs, low participation in medical standards and overall reduction of workforce in many villages are among some of the things contributing to the low number.

Total of five regional EFF crews listed on the statewide rotation (Federal/BLM):

- Kobuk Valley
- Yukon-Koyukuk
- Yukon Flats
- Kusilvak
- Mooseheart (started out as a small squad then later went out as a 15 person crew)

Firefighting Squads assigned

Due to the low number of qualified firefighters to field the full 20-person crews, AFS reached out at different times to available and qualified firefighters who had not been assigned in order to field small squads. AFS has done this sort of thing in the past on a local zone level. Small squads are easier to mobilize and support, but can be less productive only because there are fewer people than a 20-person crew.

- Minto (twice) (7 individuals)
- Ruby/Mooseheart (10 individuals)
- Fort Yukon (5 individuals)
- Stebbins/Holy Cross (10 individuals)



Dennis Erick, a squad boss on the Yukon Flats Type 2 Emergency Firefighter Crew, walks the fire line checking on his crew members on July 17, 2019 as they wet down the edge of a burn operation to protect Native allotments from the Chandalar River Fire.



Chalkyitsik Complex Camp Crew on Friday, July 19, 2019. Photo Courtesy Stephanie Herbert, First Chief Chalkyitsik Village.

Camp Crews assigned in 2019

Camp crews have been used in the past, depending on need. The 2019 season provided a workload necessary to utilize camp crews to assist and support Incident Management Teams with logistics at remote locations throughout the state. Camp Crew Bosses (CPCB) must have experience as a Type 2 Crew Boss (CRWB). It is helpful to have a few others on the crew with firefighter experience too. Camp crews assigned this fire season:

- Huslia
- Galena 2
- Venetie 1
- Venetie 2
- Minto

Single Resource individuals assigned in 2019

Individuals who have Single Resource (SR) qualifications, such as the positions below, must have specific training for the position(s) they are hired for. Some SR positions do require a work capacity test (light, moderate or arduous).

Starting in 2020, all EFF/ADs, including locally-hired laborers, will be required to have successfully completed both of the following on-line FEMA training courses:

1. IS-700.B: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System
2. IS-100.C: Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS 100

Both on-line courses can be found at:

<https://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx>

Single resource EFF/AD individuals assigned this fire season:

- 3 - HECM (Helicopter Crew Members)
- 1 - BCMG (Base Camp Manager)
- 2 - RCDM (Receiving and Distribution Manager)
- 6 - Dispatchers
- 3 - PTRC (Personnel Time Recorders)
- 2 - Materials Handlers (At the Galena Warehouse)
- Food Service Workers (At the Galena Dining Hall)
- 2 – RADO (Radio Operators)
- 27 – Additional local hired EFF/AD personnel (Ruby, Chalkyitsik and Fort Yukon)



Rolland Linus of Allakaket tapes up a set of dolmars gas can for chainsaws while he and a squad of BLM AFS emergency firefighters mobilize for a Black River Fire burning in the Upper Yukon Zone on June 28, 2019. Nicholas Cleveland of Hughes, in back, also helped organize the squad's gear.



From left: BLM AFS materials handler Elliot Crefley of Fairbanks worked with locally-hired warehouse staff Scott Thomas and Joe Peter of Fort Yukon to supply the firefighters with the equipment they needed while working on fires in northeast Alaska.

2020 Medical Self Certification*

All EFF Responders medically qualified to participate in the Work Capacity Test (WCT or pack test) and fight fire in 2019 (including those who became qualified after completing a medical waiver process) must complete an on-line self-certification process and be medically cleared for arduous duty prior to participating in the WCT in 2020.

If you would like to complete the self-certification process, you must do the following:

- Make sure the AFS EFF Office has a correct and current email address on file.
ALL EFF RESPONDERS MUST HAVE A VALID EMAIL ADDRESS ON FILE IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THIS PROCESS.
The EFF Office has attempted to contact all 2019 qualified EFF responders in order to verify email addresses.
If you did not receive a call, please call us ASAP at 1-833-532-8810 Option 4.
- Check your email often for instructions from Comprehensive Health Services (CHS).
- Follow the CHS emailed instructions for setting up an Examinee Access System (EAS) account.
- Request a Wildland Firefighter (WLFF) self-certification through the EAS prior to, but within 45 days of the scheduled WCT.
- Log in to EAS and check the results. You will be notified via email when your results are available in EAS. If qualified, save/print your qualification certificate.
- Present the WCT administrators with your qualification certificate when you go to the WCT event.
- If unqualified, follow the instructions provided by CHS, contact the DOI Medical Standards Program customer service at 1-888-286-2521, or contact the AFS EFF Office.

Results of the self-certification process are NOT immediate. You must get this done well before the day of the WCT but, no sooner than 45 days prior to the WCT.

2020 Baseline Medical Exams*

If you did not request and/or complete an arduous duty baseline medical exam (for firefighters) in 2019 and you want to do so for 2020 you need to contact the AFS EFF Office at 1-833-532-8810 Option 4. Baseline medical exams are completed at one of the hub clinic locations shown in the list below. If you call to request a baseline medical exam, you need tell us which hub clinic location you wish to take the exam at:

- Anchorage – Fairbanks – Bethel – Galena –
– Soldotna – Wasilla – Kenai –

REMEMBER, You must complete the exam process and be medically cleared to take the WCT. It can take 10 to 15 days after the exam for an individual to be cleared.

* EFF Responder EAS Log-In Accounts for Medical Standards

All EFF responders will need a valid email address and an EAS account in order to complete the **self certification**, request a **baseline exam** or to complete a **light/moderate duty Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ)**. In the future, you will also need this account in order to request a **periodic exam**.

Fort Wainwright Security Screening

If you are an EFF responder who may have a criminal background (felony or misdemeanor) and/or think that your criminal background will prevent you from being allowed access onto Fort Wainwright Post, you will need to apply for a waiver. To do so you must obtain and complete the Access Control Denial Waiver Application. The application will need to be filled out completely and court documents attached as necessary. The completed denial waiver application package needs to be sent to the TCC EFF Program Coordinator at:

FAX: 907-459-3852

MAIL: Tanana Chief's Conference

ATTN: TCC Forestry Program

122 1st Ave Suite 600

Fairbanks, AK 99701

TCC will forward completed waiver application packets to Fort Wainwright Security. Because the Army takes up to 30 days to process waiver applications, they must be completed and submitted as soon as possible. Once Fort Wainwright Security makes a determination, you will be notified by telephone. You may also pick up your determination packet at the Fort Wainwright Visitor's Center. You can contact the Visitor's Center at 907-361-6144.



Members of the EFF Type 2 Kobuk Valley Crew were interviewed by an Al Jazeera news crew during the Swan Lake Fire.

REAL ID Compliant in October 2020

Starting Oct. 1, 2020, All federal and state EFF will need to present a REAL ID compliant license/ID, or another acceptable form of identification, for accessing federal facilities and boarding commercial aircraft. EFF will not be hired after Oct. 1, 2020 if they do not have a REAL ID compliant form of identification.

For more information please visit:

<http://doa.alaska.gov/dmv/akol/ID%20News.htm>

Fireline Safety Refreshers and WCT

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) will again be facilitating the refresher training (RT-130) and WCT in all locations throughout the Upper Yukon, Tanana and Galena Zones. Dates and locations will be posted at a later date.

Rookie Academy

There is no rookie training scheduled yet. AFS zones will be determining the needs and plan accordingly.

S-131, S-212, HECM

AFS zones will be determining the needs for Squad Boss training and Chainsaw Operator training next spring (2020). Training session dates and times are yet to be determined.

CRWB Academy

The next Crew Boss Academy (training to be a Crew Boss) is not scheduled until the spring of 2021.

S-260/261

Anyone interested in Administrative Support duties such as Personnel Time Recorder (PTRC), Equipment Time Recorder (EQTR), Time Unit Leader or Compensation/Claims and would like to be considered for training please contact the EFF Program Coordinator Hudson Plass as 907-356-5611 or 1-833-532-8810 (option 4).



From left: BLM AFS cook Laura Fischer of Fairbanks, and local hires Annie Peter and Ruth Peterson made three meals each day for dozens of people while working at the Fort Yukon Fire Station this summer.



The Fort Yukon Camp Crew was working on the Shovel Creek Fire on July 4, 2019.

D-110/310/311/312

Anyone interesting in dispatch training please contact the EFF Program Coordinator Hudson Plass at 907-356-5611 or 1-833-532-8810 (option 4).

Self-Sufficiency for EFF/ADs

Self-sufficiency can be defined as providing for one's own needs without external assistance. Self-subsistence requirements can vary widely depending on the assignment. Individual sponsoring units may have specific requirements.

AFS now encourages all single resource EFF responders (dispatchers, PTRCs, EQTRs, BCMGs, RCDMs, HECMs and many other positions) to have the capability to support themselves while on assignment. Each individual should be able to provide for all their expenses (meals, lodging, transportation) while on assignments, even if the order is for a position located at a fire camp or with an Incident Management Team. Often, an individual EFF will get reassigned to another incident, where lodging is not provided, and employees are expected to subsist themselves.

Individuals will be reimbursed for all incident related travel expenses (meals, lodging, transportation and incidentals) upon returning from assignment and after completing a request for reimbursement. For more details, see your zone Administrative Assistant.