



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
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EMS Transmission 10/08/2008  
Instruction Memorandum No. FA IM-2009-001  
Expires: 09/30/2009

To: Fire and Aviation Employees  
From: Deputy Assistant Director (NIFC), Fire and Aviation  
Subject: Fitness Membership Fee Reimbursement Program DD: 01/31/2009

**Program Area:** Human Resources Management, Quality of Work Life Programs

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Instruction Memorandum (IM) is to update the Fire and Aviation policy regarding the Fitness Membership Fee Reimbursement Program.

**Authority:** U.S.C. Section 7901, et seq.

**Policy/Action:** In an effort to promote and maintain the physical and mental fitness of our employees, this policy establishes a program to reimburse an employee up to 50 percent of an individual membership fee for a commercial, non-federally sponsored fitness center (not to exceed \$275.00 annually).

**Timeframe:** This policy becomes effective when this IM is signed.

**Budget Impact:** The cost of this program is funded by each individual's office within the set dollar limit for each employee.

**Background:** Fitness programs are widely recognized as creating positive impacts on employee health as it affects performance and productivity. Therefore, it is in the best interest of Fire and Aviation to assist employees in achieving and maintaining a healthy and fit federal workforce.

**Manual/Handbook Sections Affected:** None.

**Coordination:** This IM was coordinated with the Human Resource Management (HRM) Group and the Fire and Aviation Directorate.

**Employee Eligibility:** Cost-shared participation in off-site commercial physical fitness facilities is limited to permanent full and part-time employees and employees on time-limited appointments of one year or more. Participation is strictly voluntary. To be eligible for reimbursement, employees must self-certify participation in fitness activities at their facility at least two times per week for at least a half hour (1/2) per visit.

**Selection of Commercial Physical Fitness Facilities:** Employees should select fitness facilities which include a full complement of exercise equipment and programs for cardiovascular and body strengthening. The fitness facilities must be non-segregated wherein membership and use are not restricted by sex, race, national origin, color, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Recreational activities such as baseball, softball, basketball, bowling, golf, tennis, or volleyball are **not** approved fitness activities for which Fire and Aviation will make reimbursement. Additionally, weight loss programs, stress management programs, blood pressure testing, cholesterol screening, smoking cessation, substance abuse counseling, or other similar programs **do not** qualify for reimbursement under the fitness center membership reimbursement program.

**National Interagency Fire Fitness Center:** The facility is for use by all National Interagency Fire Center tenants. The center is open between the hours of 9:00 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. From 6:00 to 9:00 AM and 4:30 to 6:00 PM, entry to the facility can be obtained by calling Security (866-6666). From April 1 through September 30, the facility will be reserved daily for Smokejumper use during specified times. Reserved times will be posted on the main entrance to the facility.

**Individual Employee Contract:** Employees who elect to participate in the program individually contract for access to a private fitness center's exercise facilities. If the facilities meet the requirements identified above, employees will be eligible to be reimbursed for 50 percent of their individual membership fee up to \$275 per year, whichever is less.

**Informed Consent and Waiver Statement:** Prior to actual participation, the employee must complete and sign an Informed Consent and Waiver Form (Attachment 1) and obtain their supervisor's approval. This waiver must be renewed each year. The employee submits the original of the completed form to HRM where it is maintained on file.

**Reimbursement Procedures for reimbursement of the previous year's membership fees:** Membership fee reimbursements are submitted annually after the end of the calendar year for which the fees were paid.

Submit the completed documents to HRM between January 1-31, 2009.

Any missing information will delay your reimbursement. Make sure the following forms are attached and completed.

- Informed consent and waiver form (Attachment 1)
  - a) Employee signature and date;

- b) Supervisor's signature and date;
- c) Fitness Center's name, address and phone number.
  
- Memorandum-Report of Taxable Fringe Benefit (Attachment 2)
  - a) Employee signature and date;
  - b) Supervisor's signature and date.
  
- Self-Certification of Usage (Attachment 3)
  - a) Fitness Center's name;
  - b) Employee signature and date;
  - c) Supervisor's signature and date.
  
- Fitness agreement (copy of contract or other documentation that provides information on the cost of an individual, annual membership at the fitness facility).
  
- Paid receipts/invoices or other proof of payment for individual membership fees. Proof of payment for membership fees must be provided before employees can receive reimbursement.

Human Resources will forward appropriate documents to the National Operations Center, Accounts Payable Branch, OC-6221 for payment no later than February 15, 2009. Employees can expect to see reimbursement (Pay Code ERB Fringe Benefit) after at least 4 pay periods.

Fire and Aviation will **only** reimburse individual membership fees. Initiation fees and state tax fee **will not be** reimbursed. However, if an employee has a family membership, the employee must provide documentation of the cost for an individual membership. Fifty percent reimbursement will be based on that amount.

Tax Liability: Program cost-share reimbursement is made through the Federal Personnel and Payroll System (FPPS) and will be included with the employee's bi-weekly salary payment. The amount reimbursed is a taxable benefit and will be reported as taxable income to the Internal Revenue Service, and will be subject to Federal, FICA, Medicare, state and local taxes.

Termination of Participation: An employee may terminate program participation at any time by informing Human Resources and their supervisor in writing.

Time and Attendance Issues: Only Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters can use official time for fitness activities due to the physical requirements and rigorous duties of these positions. All other employees may use the fitness centers during their lunch break in accordance with the policies governing their specific work schedule. Employees may also seek advance approval to use accrued credit time, compensatory time off or annual leave to participate in a fitness program. Supervisors are encouraged to cooperate with employees who wish to adjust their work schedule to include their lunch period in order to use the fitness facilities.

**Contact:** If there are questions regarding this policy, please contact Annie Banks in Human Resources, 208-387-5518.

Signed by:  
Denise M. Schmitz, Acting  
Deputy Assistant Director (NIFC), Fire and Aviation

Authenticated by:  
Erin K. Maskalick  
Records Management Specialist

3 Attachments:

- 1 - Informed Consent and Waiver Form (1 p)
- 2 - Memorandum-Report of Taxable Fringe Benefit (1 p)
- 3 - Self Certification of Usage (1 p)

Distribution:

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