(b) Whenever a variation is granted, the Director shall note the official record to show:

(1) The particular practical difficulty or hardship involved;

(2) What is permitted in place of what is required by regulations;

(3) The circumstances which protect or promote the efficiency of the Government and the integrity of the competitive service; and

(4) A statement that the variation applies only while the conditions that gave rise to it continue.

(c) Like variations shall be granted whenever like conditions exist. All such decisions and information concerning variations noted in the official record shall be published promptly in the **Federal Register** or on the Office's website.

PART 6—EXCEPTIONS FROM THE COMPETITIVE SERVICE (RULE VI)

■ 10. The authority citation for part 6 is revised to read:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 3301, 3302; E.O. 14410, 91 FR 34893.

§ 6.1 [Amended]

■ 11. In § 6.1(a), remove the words ''in OPM's annual report for the fiscal year in which the exceptions are made'' and add, in their place, ''in the **Federal Register** or on OPM's website''.

§ 6.8 [Amended]

■ 12. In § 6.8, remove paragraphs (a), (b), and (c), and redesignate paragraphs (d) and (e) as paragraphs (a) and (b).

PART 9—WORKFORCE INFORMATION (RULE IX)

■ 13. Add an authority citation to read as follows:

Authority: E.O. 13197, 66 FR 7853, 3 CFR, 2001 Comp., p. 750; E.O. 14410, 91 FR 34893.

§ 9.1 [Amended]

■ 14. In § 9.1, remove the words ''Imagery and Mapping'' and add, in their place, ''Geospatial-Intelligence''.

PART 10—AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS; OPM AUTHORITY TO REVIEW PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS (RULE X)

■ 15. Add an authority citation for part 10 to read as follows:

Authority: E.O. 13197, 66 FR 7853, 3 CFR, 2001 Comp., p. 750; E.O. 14410, 91 FR 34893.

§ 10.1 [Amended]

■ 16. In § 10.1, remove the words ''General Accounting'' and add, in their place, ''Government Accountability''.

[FR Doc. 2026–16630 Filed 8–13–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6325–46–P

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

5 CFR Parts 532 and 550

[Docket ID: OPM–2026–0199]

RIN 3206–AO76

Differential Pay for Prescribed Wildland Fire Activities

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Office of Personnel Management is issuing a final rule to add prescribed (planned) wildland fire duties as covered activities triggering payment of Hazardous Duty Pay (HDP) for General Schedule (GS) employees and Environmental Differential Pay (EDP) for Federal Wage System (FWS) employees. The final rule authorizes a 25 percent differential for GS and FWS employees participating as a member of a firefighting crew engaged in activities on the fireline directly involving the implementation and control of prescribed wildland fires.

DATES:

Effective date: This regulation is effective September 14, 2026.

Applicability date: This change applies on the first day of the first pay period beginning on or after September 14, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ana Paunoiu, by telephone at (202) 606–2858 or by email at *paypolicy@opm.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Digest of Public Comments

On April 14, 2026, OPM issued a proposed rule (91 FR 19081) to add prescribed wildland fire activities as new HDP and EDP categories under 5 CFR parts 550 and 532. The proposed rule had a 60-day comment period ending June 15, 2026. OPM received 92 comments from Federal employees, one labor organization, one public sector organization, and one private sector organization. Public comments, with a few exceptions, strongly supported OPM's proposal to authorize a 25 percent differential for GS employees, including General Schedule Wildland Firefighters (GW pay plan), and FWS employees participating on a firefighting crew engaged in activities on the fireline directly involving the implementation and control of prescribed wildland fires.

Commenters primarily addressed the following issues: coverage of employees paid under pay plan ''GW'' and employees in the 0456 Wildland Fire Management occupational series; whether prescribed fire duties warrant the same 25 percent differential provided for wildfire fireline duties; the exclusion of pre-ignition preparation activities; legal authority and concerns about double compensation; comparisons to other hazardous Forest Service duties; potential cost and operational incentives; and requests to expand coverage to smokejumper proficiency or training jumps and to aviation or air tanker base personnel.

After considering the comments, OPM is adopting the proposed regulatory text and 25 percent differential without change. The responses to the comments in Section III. provide clarifications on the differential coverage, payment, and other provisions.

II. Background

HDP is a pay differential authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5545(d) and 5 CFR part 550, subpart I, for GS employees performing duties approved by OPM in Appendix A to subpart I that involve unusual physical hardship or hazard. EDP is a pay differential authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5343(c)(4) and 5 CFR 532.511 for FWS employees exposed to working conditions or hazards that fall within one of the categories approved by OPM in Appendix A of 5 CFR part 532, subpart E. This final rule establishes new HDP and EDP categories at a 25 percent rate for Federal employees performing prescribed (planned) wildland fire activities. Existing HDP and EDP provisions already provide a 25 percent differential for qualifying wildfire fireline work (*i.e.,* participating as a member of a crew fighting forest and range fires), but they do not cover prescribed fires. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and the Department of the Interior (DOI) requested that OPM add prescribed wildland fire activities as covered categories because employees engaged in those operations are exposed to many of the same physical, chemical, and biological hazards encountered on wildfire firelines.

As in the proposed rule, the final rule limits differential coverage to employees participating as a member of a firefighting crew engaged in activities on the fireline directly involving the implementation and control of a prescribed wildland fire. The rule does not extend the differential to pre-ignition preparation activities. OPM retains this limitation because the hazards justifying coverage are associated with the active fire environment and its immediate aftermath on the fireline, not preparatory work performed before a fire has been ignited.

For FWS employees, OPM presented the proposal to add an EDP category for prescribed wildland fire activities to the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee at its July 18, 2024, meeting, and the Committee recommended the change by consensus. For GS employees, the final rule also adds 5 CFR 550.904(f) to clarify that the classification-based exclusion on HDP under 5 U.S.C. 5545(d)(1) and 5 CFR 550.904(a)–(b) does not apply to employees in occupational series covering positions whose primary duties involve the prevention, control, suppression, or management of wildland fire, consistent with the amendment to 5 U.S.C. 5545(d)(1) made by Public Law 117–58 (Nov. 15, 2021).

Prescribed fire duties such as ignition, holding, patrol, mop-up, fireline construction, and snag felling expose employees to open flame, radiant and convective heat, smoke, unstable terrain, fire-weakened trees, chemical by-products of combustion, and biological hazards. OPM concluded that these hazards cannot be fully mitigated through training, personal protective equipment, or standard operational controls and are comparable in degree to the hazards supporting the existing 25 percent differential for wildfire fireline work.

III. Response to Major Comments

a. Coverage of GW Pay Plan and 0456 Wildland Firefighter Employees

OPM received 7 comments from employees recommending that the final rule include employees paid under the GW pay plan. See, *e.g.,* Comments 04, 05, 13, 19, and 03.[1] The proposed rule addressed the coverage of employees under the GW code for wildland firefighters. Footnote 1 of the proposed rule (91 FR 19081) expressly stated that references to 'GS' employees include GW wildland firefighters. As such, qualifying GS employees, including employees under pay plan code GW, engaged in prescribed fire activities, will be entitled to a 25 percent HDP differential.

Accordingly, GW pay plan employees are not excluded from this final rule. Eligibility is determined by whether the employee performs covered duties under the regulatory standard, not by the pay plan code alone. A GS employee (including one with a GS, GW, or other pay plan code for a subcategory of GS employees) or an FWS employee must satisfy the same duty-based requirement: participation as a member of a firefighting crew engaged in activities on the fireline directly involving implementation and control of a prescribed wildland fire.

b. Legal Authority, Position Classification, and Double-Compensation Concerns

Several comments argued that the real issue is not whether prescribed fires are hazardous, but whether hazard pay is legally authorized under OPM statutes. The commenters contend that employees in the 0456 Wildland Fire Management occupational series paid under the GW scale should not receive hazard pay for wildfire or prescribed fire duties because those hazards are already built into the position classification, job expectations, and base compensation, so any additional differential would amount to double compensation and conflict with 5 CFR 550.904. By contrast, other GS positions (such as ''GS timber employees'') are not primarily classified or paid as wildland firefighters, and when they perform fireline or other fire-related duties—including work in burned areas where hazards such as fire-weakened trees remain—the risks fall outside their normal position descriptions and base pay, making hazard pay appropriate. The comments conclude that OPM should apply its regulations consistently by denying hazard pay to GW employees whose hazardous duties are already compensated through the classification and associated base pay of their position, while authorizing it for other GS employees who perform similar hazardous duties without equivalent pay, thereby reducing pay inequities and avoiding disincentives for non-fire personnel to support fire operations. See, *e.g.,* Comments 61, 62, 64, and 65.

As stated in the proposed rule, while 5 U.S.C. 5545(d)(1) and 5 CFR 550.904 generally bar hazard pay when a hazard has already been taken into account in the classification of the position, Congress amended 5 U.S.C. 5545(d)(1)(A) to create an exception for employees in occupational series whose primary duties involve the prevention, control, suppression, or management of wildland fires. This exception means GW–0456 employees are not categorically barred from hazard pay simply because fire duties are part of their position duties. Furthermore, the comments make a distinction between ''GW'' and ''GS'' employees. As we previously stated, ''GS'' refers to the General Schedule classification and pay system and multiple pay plan codes exist within this system, including the GW code for wildland firefighters; references to GS employees in the proposed rule therefore include wildland firefighters under the GW pay plan code.

Regarding the argument that GS and FWS employees outside the primary fire series should not be undercompensated when they perform the same hazardous fireline work, this point supports including those employees; it does not justify excluding GW employees who are doing the same qualifying work under a statute that now expressly permits hazard pay for employees in an occupational series for wildland firefighters. In conclusion, GW–0456 wildland firefighters are eligible for prescribed-fire hazard pay when they meet the same duty-based criteria that apply to other covered GS employees.

c. Prior Wildland Firefighter Pay Enhancements

One commenter asserted that Federal firefighters have already received substantial compensation enhancements—including a temporary $20,000 pay increase, a permanent pay increase, creation of the 0456 occupational series, and the GW pay scale—and that these changes were meant to account for the hazards of wildland firefighting in their base pay. Because of that, the commenter contends GW employees should no longer receive hazard pay differentials, as doing so would amount to double compensation and violate applicable law. In contrast, the commenter stated that other GS and FWS employees who perform fire duties only on a collateral, emergency, or situational basis have not had those hazards built into their base pay and therefore should remain eligible for hazard pay. The commenter concluded that OPM should end hazard pay for GW employees to comply with its rules and avoid widening pay disparities between GW employees and other GS/FWS employees performing similar work. Comment 76.

The assertion that GW employees must be excluded from hazard pay is inconsistent with current law. Congress amended 5 U.S.C. 5545(d)(1)(A) specifically to create an exception to the

[1] A reference at the end of a comment summary provides the location of the item in the public record. (*i.e.,* the three-digit number associated with the location in the docket). Comments filed in response to the proposed rule are available at *https://www.regulations.gov/comment/OPM-2026-0199-00nn* where ''nn'' is the comment number.

hazard pay provisions for wildland firefighters (including those who prevent, control, suppress, or manage wildland fires) so that they may receive hazard pay even when their position description includes said hazard. Moreover, the 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117–58) did not give every firefighter employee a permanent blanket $20,000 raise but gave eligible USDA and DOI wildland firefighters a temporary supplement of up to $20,000 a year or 50 percent of base salary, whichever was less. Furthermore, wildland firefighter pay reform was enacted by Congress in section 1807 of the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Public Law 119–4), which established a special base rate for GS and FWS firefighter employees. Any fairness concerns involving GS and FWS employees who perform wildland firefighting activities as a collateral-duty may be addressed by ensuring they are properly compensated under existing law and regulation for the work they perform rather than by withholding hazard pay from GW firefighters that the governing statutes authorize.

d. Whether Prescribed Fire Duties Warrant the Differential and Scope of Covered Activities

One commenter wrote against the implementation of OPM's proposal, stating that prescribed fire operations, when properly planned and executed, are controlled activities designed to minimize risk to personnel and are not inherently more hazardous than other types of ''woods work'' that do not qualify for hazard pay. Additionally, the commenter said that burn plans are developed in advance, ignition is avoided when dangerous weather is forecast, equipment and personnel are prepositioned, and site hazards are identified and mitigated, unlike wildfire operations, which are often fast-moving and unpredictable. The commenter further added that much prescribed fire work involves staging personnel and equipment and waiting for favorable conditions, raising the question of whether hazard pay would be provided for many hours that involve little or no unusual danger. The commenter also said that, if a prescribed burn escapes, existing rules already allow it to be treated as a wildfire, at which point hazard pay applies. The commenter also expressed concern that extending hazard pay to prescribed fire could create incentives for operations to take longer than necessary, increasing costs to taxpayers. Comment 21.

As explained in the proposed rule, this rulemaking will add a 25 percent differential only for GS and FWS employees who are members of a firefighting crew engaged in activities on the fireline directly involving the implementation and control of a prescribed wildland fire. Pre-ignition preparatory activities are not covered. Our rationale is not that prescribed fire is identical to wildfire in every respect; it is that employees on the fireline during ignition, holding, patrol, snag felling, and mop-up still face open flame, radiant and convective heat, smoke, unstable terrain, fire-weakened trees, and chemical and biological hazards that cannot be fully mitigated. The proposed rule cites 2,142 smoke or inhalation exposure incidents during prescribed fire operations from 2018 to 2023, 15 prescribed fire fatalities from 2003 to 2023, and injury frequency and severity similar to large-fire suppression (91 FR 19082 and 19083). Furthermore, OPM specifically did not include ''preparation'' in the proposed regulatory language and explained in the proposed rule that the new differential is justified by management of an active fire and its aftermath, not preparatory activities before ignition. As such, moving personnel and equipment into place and waiting for the burn window will not be the trigger for payment. Additionally, the hazards OPM identifies exist before any loss of containment: ignition, holding, patrol, mop-up, smoke exposure, heat, falling trees, unstable terrain, and other direct fireline hazards all occur during a successful prescribed burn. Waiting until an operation fails before recognizing hazard pay would compensate the escape event, but not the hazardous fireline work performed during normal prescribed fire implementation. The rule compensates hazardous fireline work that continues after ignition, not unnecessary delays.

Lastly, while this commenter raised concerns that the proposed differential could increase the duration and cost of prescribed fire operations, the agencies that requested this authority have determined that the pay incentive is necessary and appropriate and that its benefits outweigh any additional costs. Proper management of prescribed fire activities and firefighting crews is the responsibility of the Forest Service and DOI.

e. Comparison to Other Hazardous Forest Service Duties

Another commenter stated that prescribed fire activities are among the least dangerous duties performed by Forest Service employees. The commenter wrote that timber sale staff, recreation technicians, forest protection officers, and employees who clean and maintain recreation sites often face far greater risks, including encounters with armed individuals in isolated areas, a wide range of chemicals, and environmental hazards. The commenter also said either HDP or EDP should apply broadly to all employees facing these kinds of risks, or it should not be provided at all. Comment 56.

The fact that other Forest Service employees may also face certain on-the-job risks does not mean firefighters performing prescribed fire duties on the fireline should be denied hazard pay if their work meets the standard for unusual hazard exposure. The proposed rule is not a blanket bonus for all agency employees; it is limited to those directly involved in implementing and controlling prescribed fire on the fireline. In those roles, employees are exposed to hazards such as heat, smoke, open flame, unstable terrain, and fire-damaged trees—risks that may be reduced by planning and protective equipment but not eliminated. Whether other jobs can also have risks is beyond the scope of this rulemaking; this rulemaking is limited to the issue of whether this particular work qualifies for hazard pay under the applicable standard. If other positions deserve similar consideration, that should be evaluated separately through an evidence-based review and future rulemaking, as appropriate.

f. Requests To Expand Coverage to Smokejumper Training, Aviation, and Air Tanker Base Personnel

One organization supported OPM's proposal, asserting that firefighters face the same smoke exposure, fire behavior, and physical demands on prescribed burns as they do on wildfires. The organization also asked OPM to consider expanding the rule to include smokejumper proficiency and training jumps, arguing that those jumps carry risks similar to operational jumps. Comment 92. Another commenter argued that fixed-wing and air tanker base personnel also face serious hazards, including spinning propellers, Jet A exhaust, and airborne retardant particles, and asserted that hazard pay should be considered more broadly for employees involved in other hazardous firefighting activities, not just those on the fireline. Comment 81.

OPM appreciates these comments but is not expanding the final rule beyond the scope of the proposed rule, which was limited to prescribed-fire fireline activities. The proposed rule built a record for employees participating as members of a firefighting crew engaged in fireline activities directly involving implementation and control of prescribed wildland fires. Smokejumper proficiency or training jumps, aviation operations, ramp operations, and air tanker base activities present distinct questions that were not the subject of this rulemaking record. If those activities warrant additional differential pay categories, they may be considered separately through an evidence-based review and future rulemaking, as appropriate. Limiting this rule to the hazards OPM has evaluated based on USDA and DOI requests does not imply that other activities are risk-free; it reflects the scope of this rulemaking.

g. Miscellaneous Comments

One commenter supported OPM's proposal but argued that the cost of wildfire damage and mitigation should be paid by the fossil fuel industry rather than taxpayers because climate change driven by fossil fuel use has increased the frequency and severity of fires. Comment 94. OPM acknowledges receipt of the commenter's views regarding climate change, fossil-fuel producers, and who should bear the financial burden of wildfire mitigation; however, these issues are outside the scope of this rule.

Another comment asked OPM to issue guidance identifying endangered species affected by this rule. OPM acknowledges receipt of the commenter's views regarding listed species and habitat protection during prescribed burns. Comment 93. However, this rulemaking is limited to pay administration for Federal employees. Responsibilities for identifying listed species, evaluating habitat effects, and conducting the appropriate environmental reviews for wildland fire activities remain with the responsible agencies under other existing authorities.

IV. Section-by-Section Analysis

a. Part 532—Prevailing Rate Systems

OPM is amending appendix A to subpart E of 5 CFR part 532 to add a new EDP category under Part II, category 10, Firefighting, for FWS employees. The new category authorizes a 25 percent differential for employees participating as a member of a firefighting crew engaged in activities on the fireline directly involving the implementation and control of a prescribed wildland fire. The differential is payable on the basis of hours in pay status, consistent with the structure of Part II of the EDP schedule. All other firefighting EDP categories remain in place.

b. Part 550—Pay Administration (General)

OPM is adding 5 CFR 550.904(f) to clarify that the restriction on paying HDP when a hazard or physical hardship has been taken into account in the classification of an employee's position does not apply to an employee in an occupational series covering positions for which the primary duties involve the prevention, control, suppression, or management of wildland fire. This amendment implements the statutory exception in 5 U.S.C. 5545(d)(1)(A).

OPM is also amending appendix A to subpart I of 5 CFR part 550 to revise the Firefighting category in the HDP schedule. The revised category adds a 25 percent differential for GS employees participating as a member of a firefighting crew engaged in activities on the fireline directly involving the implementation and control of a prescribed wildland fire. The amendment leaves the existing firefighting categories for forest and range fires, equipment, installation, or building fires, and in-water under-pier firefighting operations in place.

V. Expected Impact of This Rule

A. Statement of Need

This final rule is needed to address a pay disparity between Federal employees performing prescribed wildland fire activities and Federal employees performing comparable wildfire fireline duties. This rule is also intended to improve recruitment and retention of GS and FWS employees needed to carry out prescribed fire operations.

B. Impact

This final rule will primarily apply to firefighters at USDA and DOI. In limited circumstances, however, other agencies may also have employees temporarily assigned to prescribed wildland fire activities who meet the criteria for payment of a differential. OPM estimated in the proposed rule that approximately 10,000 GS employees and 2,500 FWS employees at USDA and DOI could be affected. OPM did not receive any comment on that estimate.

C. Costs

Utilizing current GS and FWS pay rates, USDA has estimated that providing HDP and EDP for prescribed fires will cost around $20 million annually, while the DOI has estimated it to be around $12.5 million annually.

All Forest Service employees engaged in prescribed fires and wildfire response are paid from a single salary line for firefighters. The Forest Service sees on average roughly 80 percent of the operational firefighters participating in prescribed fire in any given fiscal year. The cost estimate of $20 million for the Forest Service for FY 2026 is based on approximately 250 hours of prescribed fire operations per employee. These numbers can fluctuate heavily depending on burn conditions, weather, frequency of wildfires (which take priority), etc.

Using the FY 2025 total as the baseline, DOI compared FY 2025 prescribed fire accomplishments (acres treated) with draft FY 2026 and FY 2027 targets, which are about 10 percent higher than FY 2025 accomplishments. To accommodate both the expected increase in work and labor costs—including a 1 percent annual pay adjustment in January 2026, DOI increased the FY 2026 Hazard Pay estimate by 11 percent over FY 2025 actual obligations, resulting in $8.95 million, rounded up to $9.0 million. For FY 2027, DOI increased the estimate from $9.0 million to $9.5 million (a 5.6 percent increase) to account for potential additional labor cost increases and further increases in targets and accomplishments, reflecting DOI leadership and administration priorities around fuels management and the expectation of a departmental performance target in the FY 2026/2027 timeframe. OPM did not receive any comment on that estimate.

D. Benefits

This rule has important benefits. As stated in the proposed regulation, the hazards faced by FWS and GS employees conducting prescribed fire activities mirror those faced by FWS and GS employees managing wildfires. Providing commensurate pay for prescribed fire operations will help with recruiting and retaining FWS and GS employees. Providing the differential pay also shows a recognition of the risks associated with the work performed by wildland firefighters and places a correct and higher value on the much-needed service.

Regulatory Compliance

A. Regulatory Review

OPM has examined the impact of this rule as required by Executive Orders 12866 and 13563, which direct agencies to assess all costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public, health, and safety effects, distributive impacts, and equity). A regulatory impact analysis must be prepared for rules that have an annual effect on the economy of $100 million or more or adversely affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local, or tribal governments or communities. This rulemaking does not reach that threshold and was not designated as a ''significant regulatory action'' under section 3(f) of E.O. 12866. This rule is not considered an Executive Order 14192 regulatory action because it imposes no more than de minimis costs.

B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Director of OPM certifies that this rulemaking will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

C. Federalism

This regulation will not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the National Government and the States, or on distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with E.O. 13132, the Director of OPM certifies that this final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

D. Civil Justice Reform

This rulemaking meets the applicable standard set forth in section 3(a) and (b)(2) of E.O. 12988.

E. Unfunded Mandates Act of 1995

Section 202 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA) requires that agencies assess anticipated costs and benefits before issuing any rule that would impose spending costs on State, local, or tribal governments in the aggregate, or on the private sector, in any 1 year of $100 million in 1995 dollars, updated annually for inflation. That threshold is currently approximately $206 million. This rulemaking will not result in the expenditure by State, local, or tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector, in excess of the threshold. Thus, no written assessment of unfunded mandates is required.

F. Congressional Review Act

Subtitle E of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (known as the Congressional Review Act or CRA) (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*) requires most final rules to be submitted to Congress before taking effect. OPM will submit to Congress and the Comptroller General of the United States a report regarding the issuance of this rule before its effective date. The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Office of Management and Budget has determined that this rule is not a major rule as defined by the CRA (5 U.S.C. 804).

G. Paperwork Reduction Act

This rulemaking does not impose any reporting or record-keeping requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act, as amended (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

List of Subjects

5 CFR Part 532

Administrative practice and procedure, Freedom of information, Government employees, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wages.

5 CFR Part 550

Administrative practice and procedure, Claims, Government employees, Wages.

Signing Statement

The Director of OPM, Scott Kupor, reviewed and approved this document and has authorized the undersigned to electronically sign and submit this document to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Office of Personnel Management.

Jerson Matias,

Federal Register Liaison.

Accordingly, OPM is amending 5 CFR parts 532 and 550 as follows:

PART 532—PREVAILING RATE SYSTEMS

■ 1. The authority citation for part 532 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5343, 5346. Sec. 532.707 also issued under 5 U.S.C. 552.

■ 2. In appendix A to subpart E of part 532, amend the table by adding a new activity to the schedule of environmental differentials under category ''10. *Firefighting*'' in the table titled ''Part II—Payment on Basis of Hours in Pay Status'' to read as follows:

Appendix A to Subpart E of Part 532—Schedule of Environmental Differentials Paid for Exposure to Various Degrees of Hazards, Physical Hardships, and Working Conditions of an Unusual Nature

* * * * *

PART II—PAYMENT ON BASIS OF HOURS IN PAY STATUS

Differential rate (percent)	Category for which payable	Effective date
* * *	* *	* *
	10. Firefighting. Participating or assisting in firefighting operations on the immediate fire scene and in direct exposure to the hazards inherent in containing or extinguishing fires.	July 1, 1972.
25	High degree..	
	—Fighting forest and range fires on the fireline	July 1, 1972.
	—Participating as a member of a firefighting crew engaged in activities on the fireline directly involving the implementation and control of a prescribed wildland fire.	First pay period beginning on or after September 14, 2026.
* * *	* *	* *

* * * * *

PART 550—PAY ADMINISTRATION (GENERAL)

■ 3. The authority citation for subpart I of part 550 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5545(d), 5548(b).

■ 4. In § 550.904, add paragraph (f) to read as follows:

* * * * *

(f) The provisions of this section concerning payment of a hazard pay differential when a hazard or physical hardship is taken into account in the classification of an employee's position does not apply to an employee in an occupational series covering positions for which the primary duties involve the prevention, control, suppression, or management of wildland fire.

■ 5. In appendix A to subpart I of part 550—Schedule of Pay Differential Authorized for Hazardous Duty Under Subpart I, amend the table by revising the ''Firefighting'' category in the Hazard Pay Differential to read as follows:

Appendix A to Subpart I of Part 550—Schedule of Pay Differentials Authorized for Hazardous Duty Under Subpart I

* * * * *

Duty	Rate of hazard pay differential (percent)	Effective date
* * * * * * *		
Firefighting:		
(1) Forest and range fires. Participating as a member of a firefighting crew in fighting forest and range fires on the fireline.	25	First pay period beginning after July 1, 1969.
(2) Prescribed wildland fire operations. Participating as a member of a firefighting crew engaged in activities on the fireline directly involving the implementation and control of a prescribed wildland fire.	25	First pay period beginning on or after September 14, 2026.
(3) Equipment, installation, or building fires. Participating as an emergency member of a firefighting crew in fighting fires of equipment, installations, or buildings.	25	First pay period beginning after July 1, 1969.
(4) In-water under-pier firefighting operations. Participating in in-water under-pier firefighting operations (involving hazards beyond those normally encountered in firefighting on land, e.g., strong currents, cold water temperature).	25	Do.
* * * * * * *		

* * * * *

[FR Doc. 2026–16687 Filed 8–13–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6325–39–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA–2026–3878; Project Identifier MCAI–2025–00913–T; Amendment 39–23437; AD 2026–16–07]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; ATR–GIE Avions de Transport Régional Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is superseding Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2023–21–10, which applied to certain ATR–GIE Avions de Transport Régional Model ATR42–500 and ATR72–212A airplanes. AD 2023–21–10 required an inspection of the horizontal stabilizer (HS) left- and right-hand leading edge lateral ribs, the box in between, the center box upper panel, and HS forward back-up fitting for discrepancies and applicable corrective action. Since the FAA issued AD 2023–21–10, it was determined that additional airplanes are affected and additional areas must be inspected. This AD continues to require the actions in AD 2023–21–10 and requires expanding the applicability and inspecting the HS front spar web and center box internal area for discrepancies and accomplishing applicable corrective actions. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective September 18, 2026.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in this AD as of September 18, 2026.

ADDRESSES:

AD Docket: You may examine the AD docket at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA–2026–3878; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this final rule, the mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI), any comments received, and other information. The address for Docket Operations is U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M–30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12–140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

Material Incorporated by Reference:

• For European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) material identified in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email *ADs@easa.europa.eu.* You may find this material on the EASA website at *ad.easa.europa.eu.*

• For ATR–GIE Avions de Transport Régional material identified in this AD, contact ATR—GIE Avions de Transport Régional, 1 Allée Pierre Nadot, 31712 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 (0) 5 62 21 62 21; fax +33 (0) 5 62 21 67 18; email *continued.airworthiness@atr aircraft.com;* website *atr-aircraft.com.*

• You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206–231–3195. It is also available at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA–2026–3878.

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