U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration

Memorandum

Subject: **INFORMATION**: Clarification of Policy on Climbing Safety

Date: NOV 28 2000

From: Director of Environment and Energy, AEE-1

Reply to Attn. of:

To: Assistant Administrators
Associate Administrators
Director, Technical Center, ACT-1
Director, Aeronautical Center, AMC-1

I am sending this memo, in response to questions from the field, to clarify the policy requirement for medical evaluations for employees who are required to climb structures as part of their duties. This requirement is found in FAA Order 3900.19B, "FAA Occupational Safety and Health Program," Chapter 10, "Fall Protection Program." Section 1003.f.(4) of that chapter requires that "Employees shall be physically capable of performing assigned job duties and shall receive medical evaluations consistent with AAM guidance."

Several regions have an established practice of allowing the fittest personnel to volunteer for NAS operations involving climbing. This is the preferred practice. The FAA provides specialized training on climbing safety and special equipment to make sure that the operation can be accomplished safely by highly motivated, well-prepared professionals. Equally important, all reasonable accommodations should be made to ensure that employees who are not able to climb safely are not permitted to climb.

We recommend that FAA supervisors of NAS operations continue to employ a simple common sense approach. If a person has a medically documented chronic disease or health problem that may interfere with climbing, he/she should not be permitted to climb ladders and other equipment that are included in the FAA Fall Protection Program. If an employee who normally climbs indicates a temporary health condition, such as a cold or headache, dizziness, etc., which would affect his/her ability to climb safely, he/she should not be permitted to climb while the symptoms persist.

If you have questions about this memo, please contact Lita Arnold, AEE-200 at (202) 267-9762.

Paul Dykeman
for James D. Erickson