NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER

3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

9216 NFES (LLFA240000)

May 4, 2009

NATIONAL FIRE EQUIPMENT SYSTEM
CACHE MEMORANDUM NO. 09-3

To: NFES: National Incident Support Caches

From: Tory Henderson, Chair, Equipment Technology Committee - NWCG

Subject: Re-Bagging New Generation Fire Shelters

In order to maximize the service life of new generation fire shelters the Interagency Fire Shelter Task Group has recommended the adoption of fire shelter re-bagging as an approved refurbishment process. The purpose of re-bagging fire shelters is to replace the outer polyvinyl chloride (PVC) bag when damaged or worn and the fire shelter contained inside the bag is still in serviceable condition. Re-bagging is not approved for fire shelters that exhibit excessive wear.

Cache inventories of new generation fire shelters with PVC bags that are too far outside of specifications to be successfully retrofitted with pull handle reinforcement under direction provided in Cache Memorandum 07-4, "Fire Shelter Polyvinyl Bag Retrofit" (April 13, 2007) are also candidates for the new re-bagging process.

A "Fire Shelter Inspection" guide has been developed to assist in fire shelter and PVC bag condition evaluation and refurbishment (attachment). These instructions will be included in the "Fire Equipment Storage and Refurbishing Standards" publication (PMS 448), available online at: www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/PMS448/pms448.pdf.

National Interagency Support Caches will accept fire shelters requiring re-bagging within their servicing area. Local units should make every effort to use the existing incident replacement procedures, as outlined in 23.3.4 and 5 of the National Interagency Mobilization Guide, for fire shelters requiring refurbishment. Fire shelters needing refurbishment outside of fire season must be accompanied by an appropriate cost code for refurbishment and/or the ordering of shelters, if the unit needs to replace their inventory.

The re-bagging process requires the use of industrial type sewing equipment, skilled personnel, and approved materials in order to be successfully accomplished. Only pre-approved facilities will be permitted to perform fire shelter re-bagging operations. At this time, approved facilities are limited to US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Smokejumpers bases with parachute loft facilities. Only National Interagency Support Caches should contact smokejumper bases directly regarding fire shelter re-bagging operations.

The Smokejumper bases have received detailed instructions on the re-bagging process. Specific arrangements in regard to delivery/shipping of fire shelters to smokejumper facilities, the time required to perform the work, and labor or other costs of fire shelter re-bagging must be negotiated between parties on a case by case basis.

Fire shelter PVC bags and associated materials are available at this time through Tony Petrilli, Fire Equipment Specialist at MTDC. Contact information for Tony is shown below. It is anticipated that starting in 2010, all National Interagency Support Caches will be able to procure the fire shelter PVC bags, pull handle assemblies, and other needed materials directly from vendor sources.

For questions about this process, contact Tory Henderson at NIFC (208) 387-5348, or e-mail at: thenderson@fs.fed.us. For technical questions contact Tony Petrilli at (406) 329-3965, or e-mail at: apetrilli@fs.fed.us

/s/ Tory Henderson

Attachment

cc:
State Fire Management Officers - BLM
Regional Directors Fire and Aviation Management - USFS
Technology Development Centers - San Dimas, Missoula
Agency Directors - NIFC
Logistics Center - NICC
Bill Hicks – GSA

FIRE SHELTER INSPECTION GUIDE

- Grey on the inside surface of the PVC bag is caused by the aluminum rubbing
- Moderate to Heavy Grey – has shown to be a sign of damaged fire shelters (holes worn through fire shelter material)
- Few Small Holes in PVC Bag – unlikely much debris has entered into the bag
- Large or Many Small Holes in PVC Bag – likely debris has entered into the bag

Evidence of moisture in bag

YES   NO

Evaluate PVC bag

Clear bag — YES → **Evaluate holes**

NO

Light to moderate grey, label is readable — YES

NO

Moderate to heavy grey, label is unreadable — YES

0-2 holes, less than ¼ inch — YES → **RETURN TO SERVICE**

NO

3-4 holes, less than ¼ inch — YES → **REBAG**

NO

1-2 holes, less than ¾ inch — YES → **REBAG**

NO

OUT OF SERVICE