

Appendix N

Cache Memorandum No. 02-03



9216 NFES (FA240)

April 22, 2002

**National Fire Equipment System
Cache Memorandum No. 02-03**

To: NFES: National Incident Support Caches

From: Paul Naman, NFES Representative-NIFC

Subject: The New VR-5AA Headlamp (NFES # 0667, NSN 6230-01-493-7630)

After an extensive period of development by the Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) a new headlamp is now available for purchase from GSA. The VR-5AA headlamp (NFES # 0667, NSN 6230-01-493-7630) has been designed to meet specific performance requirements for use by wildland firefighters and is manufactured by the Greater Hartford Easter Seals Company.

Development of the new headlamp was initiated for several reasons. Battery life of the old model 4 AA battery headlamp did not meet desired minimum requirements. The old model headlamp uses a filament type of bulb that is no longer being manufactured domestically and is considered obsolete within the industry. Bulbs of this type acquired overseas have demonstrated an unacceptable rejection rate of 90%. In 1999 the Greater Hartford Easter Seals Company asked MTDC for parameters around which to begin development of a new headlamp design using a computer chip and a modern, domestically manufactured bulb. After numerous combinations of batteries, bulbs, and chip settings, the VR-5AA headlamp was born.

The general appearance of the new headlamp is very similar to the old style 4 AA headlamps that have been available for years. The VR-5AA is actually radically different upon closer inspection. Some of the differences between the VR-5AA and the old style headlamp include the following:

- 5 AA batteries (instead of 4);
- The battery pack can be disconnected from the light head;
- The light output is controlled by a computer chip and remains at the same level until the batteries are completely discharged;
- The computer chip provides around 15 minutes warning of low batteries by pulsing the light;
- 2 light intensity settings (high/low);
- Improved battery life, with as much as 12 hours battery life at the low setting (depending on the batteries);
- Water resistant;
- Readily available white light halon bulb.

Structurally reinforced, balanced, and designed to work on a hard hat, at \$42.80 the new headlamp is more expensive than the old headlamps. It is anticipated that the higher cost of the VR-5AA will be offset by improved operating efficiency and a significant reduction in AA battery use when compared with the old headlamp system.

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If you have any questions regarding the new headlamp please contact Dennis Davis at (406) 329-3929.

/s/ Paul E. Naman

cc:

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