

NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER

3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

9216 NFES (LLFA240000)

March 6, 2013

NATIONAL FIRE EQUIPMENT SYSTEM CACHE MEMORANDUM NO. 13-1

To: NFES: National Interagency Support Caches

From: Leslie Anderson, Chair, Equipment Technology Committee – NWCG

Subject: Label/Stencil Addition to Propane Tanks, NFES 000491

The potential for asphyxiation due to carbon monoxide poisoning originating from the use of propane heaters in enclosed spaces has been recognized as a legitimate concern on late and early season fire incidents where cold temperatures may be encountered. A technical review conducted by SDTDC concluded that all current models of propane heaters utilized by the NFES caches are not safe to use in enclosed spaces, such as tents, under typical operating environments on incidents. Additional market research conducted by SDTDC concluded there are no portable propane heaters currently on the market that provide an acceptable level of safety for indoor use. This is a valid concern in other heating applications as well, such as the use of the propane fueled coffee heating kit (NFES 000480).

While a long term solution is being investigated for safely heating tents and other structures on incidents it will be especially important to ensure that incident personnel are aware of the potential hazards associated with the use of propane heaters in enclosed spaces. The NFES caches currently maintain various models of propane heaters, some of which are well marked by manufacturers regarding the potential hazards associated with indoor use while others are less well marked due to space limitations on the heater itself or other reasons.

All propane heaters, as well as any other heating application, require the addition of the NFES 000491 propane tank as a fuel source. The application of markings onto the propane tank will help to ensure incident personnel are educated or reminded that these devices are not for use indoors.



The NFES caches are instructed to apply an appropriate written warning on their inventory of propane tanks. The warning should state “NOT FOR INDOOR USE” and be located in a highly visible location on the NFES 000491 propane tank. The warning may be a painted stencil or decal, with red lettering at least 3/4 inches tall in size.

Please contact Paul Naman, BLM-NIFC at (208) 387-5421, or e-mail at pnaman@blm.gov if you have any questions or comments on this information.

/s/ Leslie Anderson
Chair, Equipment and Technology Committee

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
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