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FROM : National Wildfire Coordinating Group

REPLY TO : NWCG@nifc.gov

DATE : 03/07/2002

SUBJECT : SAFETY ADVISORY : Fireshelter Alert

The attached safety alert, issued last month by MTDC, clarifies the fireshelter bagging issue . Please see that it is distributed and posted within your agency .



Fire Shelter Polyvinyl Bag Safety Alert: February 1, 2002

An improved polyvinyl bag for the fire shelter has eliminated the tab breakage problem identified in 2001. Some new fire shelters have been issued with the redesigned polyvinyl bag. In addition, some fire shelters have been rebagged and reissued with the redesigned polyvinyl bag.

It is still important to pull the tabs halfway down on the old polyvinyl bag, but the tabs should NOT be pulled down on the redesigned bag. If you have been issued a fire shelter with the redesigned polyvinyl bag, **DO NOT** pull the tabs down.

The redesigned polyvinyl bag has a continuous one-piece red plastic strip that wraps around the shelter, ending with a pull tab on each end. The old polyvinyl bag has two separate red pull tabs that are heat-welded to the clear polyvinyl bag. They are not connected by a red plastic strip.



Old polyvinyl bag
No red strip
Pull tabs halfway down



Redesigned polyvinyl bag
Red strip
DO NOT pull tabs halfway down

The fire shelter itself is now being improved. The existing fire shelters with the old polyvinyl bag and shelters with the redesigned polyvinyl bag are both approved for use until the next generation of fire shelters becomes available. Both bags will allow the existing shelter to be deployed quickly during an emergency if instructions are followed.

Firefighters who are issued a fire shelter with an old polyvinyl bag should pull the tabs halfway down, following the instructions in the May 2001 Fire Shelter Safety Alert.

Pulling the tabs down may expose the shelter to increased wear and damage from dirt and foreign objects. Firefighters should frequently inspect their shelter as described in *Your Fire Shelter: 2001 Edition* (PMS 409-2 and NFES 1570), replacing the shelter if they detect excessive abrasion or damage. Further information is available in the May 2001 Fire Shelter Safety Alert and NFES Cache Memorandums 01-3, 01-4, 01-6, 01-08, and 02-1.