



# NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 S. Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705

## MEMORANDUM

Reference: NWCG#013-2009

To: NWCG Executive Board and GACG Chairs

From: NWCG Chair *Brian McManis*

Date: May 26, 2009

Subject: Old Style Fire Shelter Disposal

The National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB), now known as the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), transmitted a Memorandum on June 20, 2007 to NWCG partners providing an update to the field as to the status of the transition from the old style fire shelter to the new generation fire shelter. Transition to the new generation fire shelter by January 1, 2010 was agreed upon by all NWCG members.

The old style fire shelter will not be allowed on any wildland fire under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior agencies, the Forest Service, and most States beginning on January 1, 2010. The old style shelters will be taken completely out of service and disposed of properly.

NWCG acknowledges the role of local fire departments and the magnitude of response to wildland fires provided by these departments. NWCG also recognizes the ability of cooperating agencies at the local level to jointly define and accept each other's qualifications and standards and to establish specific agreements to meet fire management needs. The new generation fire shelter will be required for all national mobilizations of fireline resources, and for any resources mobilized outside of their local response area.

The Fire Shelter Advisory Board, chartered under NFAEB, has identified disposal options for the old units, which includes possible recycling of the shelters and their components. Field units have the discretion to utilize any of the identified disposal options, or they may develop additional options that work best in their local area. The Agency Administrator should ensure that all old style shelters are no longer capable of being used as a fire shelter and document this for their files.

If your unit chooses to ship their old style shelters and components to your servicing National Interagency Support Cache for their processing, please contact the Cache Manager in advance. We are targeting two primary times for national disposition of the old fire shelters, June 2009 and February-March 2010.

After January 1, 2010 if a resource arrives on a Department of Interior, Forest Service, or participating State or local unit fire with the old style shelter, one of the following three options can be selected:

1. Demobilization of the resource if they have not had training on the new generation shelter, and you do not have the capability to issue a new shelter and provide training at the incident.
2. Issue a new generation shelter to the individual and provide the appropriate training.
3. Issue a new generation shelter and allow the individual to be on the fireline if they can prove that they have had the training.

**Again, the new generation fire shelter will be required for all national mobilizations of fireline resources, and for any resources mobilized outside of their local response area. There should be no circumstances in these situations where an individual is allowed on the fireline with an old style fire shelter.**

The attached document provides the options for fire shelter disposal including recycling.

If you have any questions please contact Tory Henderson, Chair, Fire Shelter Advisory Board at (208) 387-5348 or email [thenderson@fs.fed.us](mailto:thenderson@fs.fed.us).

Attachment

## LOCAL UNIT LEVEL OPTIONS FOR OLD STYLE FIRE SHELTER DISPOSAL

### 1. Training Materials

- Booklets—recycle locally as magazines
- VCR Tapes—one-spot recycle opportunity  
GreenDisc Recycle  
Phone: 425-392-8700  
Sammamish, WA  
*www.greendisc.com*
- Local or regional units can contact GreenDisc Recycle to use its shipping containers
- 50 tapes cost \$30.

### 2. Practice shelter

Specification: 5100-611

Material: Polyethylene mesh and coating

Recycling options: one-spot recycle outlet

- JAD Core  
Contact: Rob Doti  
Phone: 812-234-2724  
Terre Haute, IN
  - Webbing must be removed.
  - Bulk recycling only, can be received from multiple units during one designated month.
  - Value: 20 cents/pound

### 3. Hard plastic liner

Specification: 5100-323

Material: High density Polyethylene (HDPE) #2 plastic

Recycling options: recycle outlets that accept #2 plastic are available in most cities.

- Where #2 plastic is recycled, it is usually accepted as a no cost/no value donation
- R&D Molders, the current supplier, may be a recycle source – cost involved

### 4. Fire shelter bag and practice shelter bag

Specification: 5100-608

Material: Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) #3 plastic

Recycling options: recycle outlets that accept #3 plastic are uncommon. A few companies will accept or sometimes pay for PVC in industrial quantities.

Companies include Absolute Polymers, Inc. in Salem, OH; Viko Enterprises, Inc. in Salt Lake City, UT; Ultra-Poly Corp. in Portland, PA; or member companies of the National Recycling Network based in Cooper City, FL

- Red tear strips, nylon webbing, and Velcro must be removed before recycling
- Value: 10 cents/pound depending on recycling outlet

**5. Carry case, practice shelter carry case**

Specification: 5100-322

Nylon Fabric Specification: 5100-86

Material: Yellow and orange Cordura

Recycling options: No recycling outlet is available at this time. There may be some type of reuse option.

- Contact Integrated Waste Services Association at [www.wte.org](http://www.wte.org) for information about reuse of items as power for generators (see Waste to Power section in this document).

**6. May convert old-style fire shelters to cabin wrap (cut into squares and sew):**

Use a contractor to convert old-style shelters into “Cabin Wrap”:

a. Produce 2 rectangular pieces (32” x 60”) from each shelter. One hundred sheets per box.

Price per sheet: \$2.30

Price per box of 100 sheets (166 lineal yards): \$230.00

Price per lineal yard: \$1.38

Price per square yard: \$1.55

b. Produce rolls of cabin wrap from old shelters (cutting 32” x 60” rectangles out of shelters and sewing sheets together).

Price per 100 yard roll: \$260.00

Price per lineal yard: \$2.60

Price per square yard: \$2.93

Notes for a. and b.:

- Cost of shipping to and from contractor would be extra.
- One potential contractor has expressed reluctance to inspect shelters prior to cutting and sewing. Inspection of the shelters may have to be accomplished by agency personnel, which would add to the cost of the project. Inspection would involve removing the shelters from the PVC bag, and opening them enough to determine if the shelters were in good enough shape to be converted to cabin wrap. The contractor would do the cutting and if necessary, sewing.
- By comparison, new cabin wrap that is 54 inches wide produced by Cleveland Laminating costs \$4.05 per lineal yard or \$2.70 square yard.
- If the old shelters are converted to cabin wrap it must be understood that the quality will not be as good a new cabin wrap. The shelters that have been carried by firefighters are more wrinkled, have more holes and pinholes, and are weaker and less reflective than pristine new cabin wrap. Stitching weak material can create new weak points where the material would be more likely to tear.

**7. Use old shelters in decent shape to:**

- Protect smaller structures such as bridges, signs and picnic tables
- As back-country campfire pans
- welding blankets
- Wrap coolers and juice troughs at fire camps to keep drinks cool
- Heat protection for vehicle pneumatic hoses such as brake lines (San Dimas T&D evaluation concluded commercial devices are available and preferred.)
- Window shading in buildings/warehouses for cooling purposes

**8. Ship old-style fire shelters and components to their servicing National Interagency Support Cache – allowed from May 15-June 15 and February 15-March 15 only**

**9. Dispose of any material through regular trash process but all shelters must be removed from their polyvinyl bag and destroyed to some degree to ensure they cannot be used as a fire shelter**

**For all options, Line Officer documents to the file that all old-style fire shelters have been taken out of service**