



**TO :**

**FROM :** National Wildfire Coordinating Group

**REPLY TO :** NWCG@nifc.gov

**DATE :** 06/15/2001

**SUBJECT :** SAFETY WARNING : Fire Shelter Alert

---

Please give this notice wide distribution within the wildland fire community . This is a new fire shelter alert that applies to ALL fire shelters.

---

June 13, 2001

**NATIONAL FIRE EQUIPMENT SYSTEM  
CACHE MEMORANDUM NO. 01-6**

To: NFES: National Incident Support Caches  
From: Paul Naman, NFES Representative - NIFC  
Subject: Fire Shelter Safety Alert

Equipment Specialists with the US Forest Service Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) have examined a large quantity of fire shelter polyvinyl bags currently in service and have determined there is a significant failure rate with fire shelter pull tabs regardless of manufacturer or date of production. **Based on these findings, immediate corrective measures are required on the polyvinyl bags of all fire shelters now in service.** The fire shelters contained within the polyvinyl bags are serviceable.

MTDC has approved, as an interim-interagency measure, the issue and use of fire shelters with defective polyvinyl cases if the following modifications are performed:

- Remove the fire shelter from the hard plastic case.
- Pull the tabs half way down on each side of the polyvinyl bag.
- Re-insert the shelter in to the hard case.

Current direction provided in the document "Your Fire Shelter, 2001 Edition" (NFES #1570) recommends against this practice in order to keep dirt and dust out of the shelter and thereby increase its useful life, however, circumstances warrant taking this action at this time. It will not effect the deployment of the shelter nor the shelter itself. This is a better option than cutting the cases at the bottom because of the possibility of damaging the shelter in the process. Direction provided in "Your Fire Shelter, 2001 Edition" regarding bi-monthly visual inspections of the fire shelter should be closely followed by users upon issue. The modification and use of fire shelters as described above will not effect the fire shelter's eligibility for eventual replacement if meeting all other published inspection criteria.

2

Specific written and pictorial directions from MTDC on the interim modifications to fire shelter polyvinyl bags is available on the Web at <http://www.fs.fed.us> and <http://www.nifc.gov> .

If you have any questions or comments on this information please contact:  
Paul Naman (208) 387-5421 or Alice Forbes (208) 387-5949.

/s/ Paul E. Naman

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

Ray Balli - GSA

Alice Forbes - USFS