

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

NMAC Correspondence M2026-06

July 10, 2026

To: Geographic Area Coordinating Groups
From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group
Subject: Non-Specification Fire Shelters

Issue: Non-specification fire shelters claiming to meet Forest Service (FS) fire shelter specification 5100-606 were first found in 2023; a new version of non-approved, non-specification fire shelters were identified in February 2026. These non-specification shelters have been found on multiple incidents during the 2026 fire season; however no non-specification shelters have been involved in entrapments or shelter deployments.

Action: Wildland firefighters, fire managers, contract inspectors, and all support personnel should remain vigilant for non-specification (i.e., counterfeit, non-approved, knockoff) fire shelters. All resources are directed to remove fire shelters from packs and cases and perform an inspection utilizing the identification elements of non-specification fire shelters and the Non-Specification Fire Shelter Inspection Flowchart included in this memo to prevent non-specification shelters from being carried on the fireline and compromising firefighter safety.

Non-specification fire shelter identification criteria may continue to evolve. Inspect all issued shelters; if questionable, contact the National Technology and Development Program (NTDP).

*****NMAC directs all wildland firefighting resources to take a 10-minute safety standdown to inspect their assigned fire shelter by end of shift Monday July 13th, 2026.*****

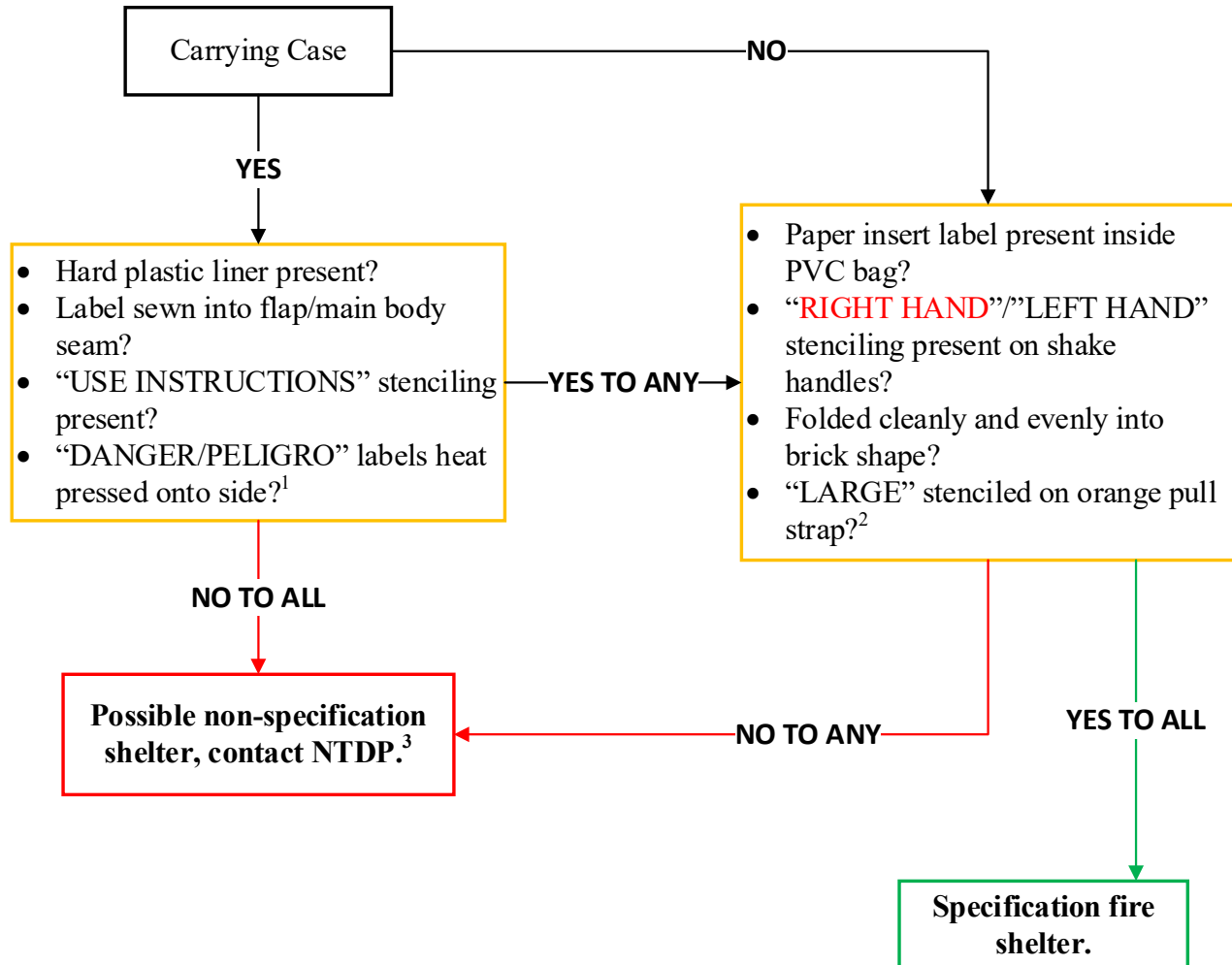
Background: NTDP has found non-specification fire shelters being sold by a variety of different retailers and/or vendors. [NWCG ETC Safety Warning 23-001 Non-Specification Fire Shelters](#) (March 8, 2023) informed the wildland fire community of shelters falsely claiming to meet Forest Service (FS) Specification 5100-606. [NWCG ETC Equipment Warning 25-001](#) (January 10, 2025) revisited the non-specification fire shelter identification process. In 2026, new non-specification versions have emerged with identifying features differing from those identified in previous equipment warnings.



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Non-Specification Fire Shelter Identification Flowchart



¹ Not all specification manufactures use "DANGER/PELIGROSO" labels. If present, the labels will be on both sides of the case and heat pressed on (no stitching).

² Applies only to Large-size fire shelters. Regular-size fire shelters have a yellow pull strap with no stenciling present.

³ Fill out the Non-Specification Fire Shelter Discovery Form or contact David Maclay-Shulte, Equipment Specialist, USFS NTDP at david.j.maclayshulte@usda.gov, (406) 329-3965 or (406) 396-4919.



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Fire shelter requirements: All fire shelters must meet FS Specification [5100-606](#)*. All current specification fire shelters come inside a polyvinyl chloride (PVC) bag with a yellow or orange pull strap and red tear strip. Shelters are carried in the blue carrying case with the hard plastic liner, in the fireline pack fire shelter sleeve or an easily accessible location on the fireline pack. See Figure 1 for fire shelter part identification.

**Note: Specification numbers may include a revision letter (e.g., 5100-606E). As design, materials, or construction methods change, specifications are updated and assigned a new revision letter. These letters track the date and changes throughout the life of the item.*

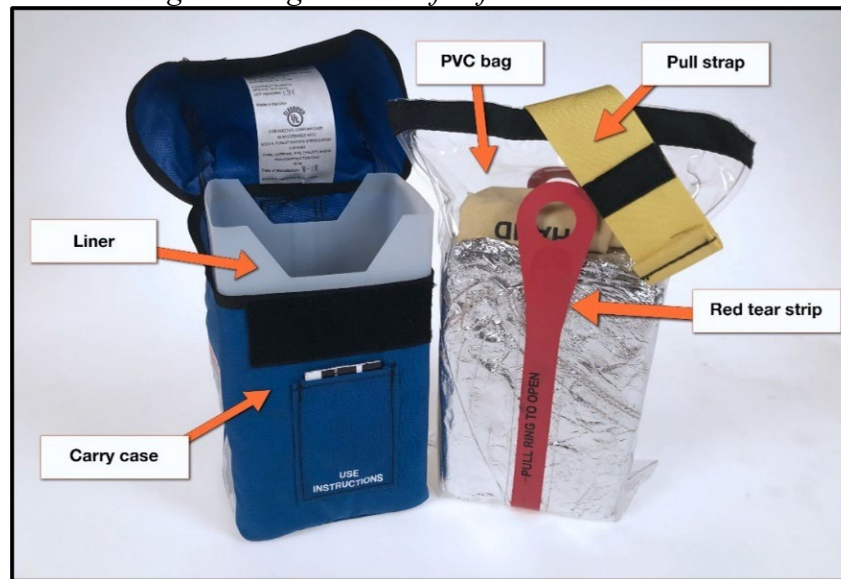


Figure 1: Size Regular specification fire shelter and carrying case, with parts labeled.

Detailed inspection process: To date, NTDP has only identified Large-size non-specification fire shelters, but non-specification versions resembling the Regular-size may also appear. Inspect all shelters upon receipt. If you find a suspected non-specification shelter, follow instructions outlined later in this memo.

1. Visual Inspection

Specification fire shelters fit easily into the fire shelter liner, and the carrying case flap closes with minimal effort. Non-specification fire shelters have not been identified with liners; however, a non-specification fire shelter may have been placed in a specification liner and/or carrying case. If a non-specification shelter is placed into a specification carrying case and liner, the non-specification shelter may require greater force to fit into the liner or extend several inches above the liner, making the carrying case flap difficult to close.



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2. Carrying Case

- **Stenciling:** Specification fire shelters have “FIRE SHELTER” stenciled on the carrying case flap and “USE INSTRUCTIONS” on the front pocket.
 - Non-specification shelters have “FIRE SHELTER” stenciled on the case flap, but do not have “USE INSTRUCTIONS” stenciled on the front pocket (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Specification carrying case (left) and non-specification (right). Note missing “USE INSTRUCTIONS” stenciling, shape of carrying case (absent squared structure of hard plastic liner), and size difference.

- **Use instructions:** Specification use instructions are bilingual with English printed on one side and Spanish on the other.
 - Non-specification shelter use instructions only have English printing on one side and do not include the Spanish version printed on the other side.
- **Danger labels:** Specification shelters may or may not have the “DANGER” and “PELIGRO” label on the carrying case side as only one specification shelter manufacturer uses them. When present, specification carrying cases will have both labels (i.e. both languages) and labels will be heat pressed on (no stitching).
 - Non-specification may have none, one, or both labels present and the labels will be sewn on (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Left is a specification carrying case with heat-pressed label, right is a non-specification carrying case with label stitched on.



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- *Internal label:* Specification carrying cases have a label sewn into the seam attaching the flap to the main body that contains manufacture information, specification number, and date of manufacture at a minimum. Specification carrying cases are made from heavy-weight nylon and can stand upright without the liner.
 - Non-specification carrying cases do not have a sewn-in label, use lighter-weight fabric, and cannot stand on their own (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Specification carrying case on left, non-specification on right. Note the non-specification case is missing the label and is unable to stand on its own.

3. PVC Bag and Fire Shelter

- *Pull strap:* The pull strap is sewn to the top of the PVC bag; the color indicates size—orange for Large and yellow for Regular. Large fire shelters have LARGE stenciled onto the pull strap.
 - Non-specification shelters have been found with an orange pull strap but do not have LARGE stenciled on the pull strap (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Specification shelter (left) with stenciling, non-specification (right) without stenciling.



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- **Insert labels:** Specification fire shelters contain a paper insert label inside the PVC bag that contains, at a minimum, the specification number, manufacturer name and address, and date of manufacture. Large-size fire shelters will have either a blue or orange insert label and regular-size shelters will have a green or yellow insert label; label size may vary (Figure 6).
 - Non-specification fire shelters do not have insert labels.
 - *Note: a white or pink insert label indicates a pre-2006 specification shelter and should be removed from service.*



Figure 6: Left image shows missing insert label on non-specification shelter. Right image shows different specification label sizes and colors.

- **Folding:** Specification fire shelters are cleanly and evenly accordion folded into a brick shape to the measurements in Table 1.
 - Non-specification shelters are folded incorrectly, sloppily, and do not meet the dimensions found in Table 1 (Figure 7).

Table 1—Specification Shelter Information

Size	Pull strap coloring and stenciling	Dimensions
Regular	Yellow pull strap	5 1/4" x 3 3/4" x 8 1/4" ±1/2"
Large	Orange pull strap LARGE stenciled on it	5 1/4" x 3 3/4" x 9 1/2" ±1/2"



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- *Shake handles:* Specification shelters are folded so the shake handles are visible, easily accessible at the top of the PVC bag, and stenciled “RIGHT HAND” in red and “LEFT HAND” in black.
 - Non-specification shelter shake handles may be buried in the folds and do not have the “RIGHT HAND” and “LEFT HAND” stenciling (see Figure 7 and Figure 8).



Figure 7: Specification shelters, left in each pair, and non-specification shelters, right in each pair, showing incorrect, sloppy folding and buried shake handles.



Figure 8: Specification shelter on left, non-specification shelter on right. Note missing stenciling on shake handle on non-specification shelter.



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Instructions for suspected non-specification fire shelters:

- If identified on an incident with a Supply Unit:
 1. Immediately remove non-specification fire shelter from service.
 2. Resources with a non-specification fire shelter should check-out fire shelter from the Supply Unit for the duration of assignment to that incident.
 3. Contact your supervisor/employer to begin procurement of a replacement specification fire shelter.
 4. Upon demobilization, the checked-out fire shelter must be returned and a specification replacement fire shelter procured.
- If identified on an incident without a Supply Unit:
 1. Immediately remove non-specification fire shelter from service.
 2. Incident Commanders should stand down resources without a specification fire shelter until replacement specification fire shelters are obtained.
- If identified at home unit:
 1. Immediately remove non-specification fire shelter from service.
 2. Procure specification fire shelter prior to incident response.
- ALL suspected non-specification fire shelters: submit a description and photo using the Non-Specification Fire Shelter Discovery Form linked below.

Information on purchasing fire shelters can be found in [NWCG ETC Equipment Warning 25-001](#).

Microsoft Forms Link: [Non-Specification Fire Shelter Discovery Form](#)

For questions or further information, please contact: David Maclay-Schulte, Equipment Specialist, U.S. Forest Service, NTDP, david.j.maclayschulte@usda.gov, (406) 329-3965 or (406) 396-4919

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/s/ Aitor Bidaburu
Vice Chair, National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

Cc:
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