

NWCG Equipment Technology Committee

Equipment Bulletin: 25-002

5/5/2025



To: Wildland Fire Community

From: Nate Hesse, Chair, NWCG Equipment Technology Committee (ETC)

Subject: Chaps, Chain Saw, M-2020, Nonconformities affecting use, appearance, and serviceability.



Issue: Forest Service specification, 6170-4K Chain Saw Chaps, all sizes (28, 32, 36, 40) ordered through FedMall may have incorrectly bound edges, exposing inner protective layers. The nonconformities impact chaps manufactured in 2024 and 2025 and are limited to a single manufacturer. Independent purchasers will need to inspect chain saw chaps prior to use.

Current Actions:

- All chain saw chap orders received from FedMall beginning in 2024 to current, should be inspected, following the criteria below, prior to use.
- Effective 4/15/2025, all pending FedMall orders are paused, and new orders will be back ordered until current inventory has been inspected.
- Inspections are occurring at all Interagency Support Caches to find and remove chain saw chaps with nonconformities.
- Cache exchange program. As stocking levels allow, caches will exchange chaps with described nonconformities, consolidate defective product, and facilitate returns through the Defense Logistics Agency.

Background: In February 2025, the National Technology and Development Program (NTDP) was notified of chain saw chaps returned to the Southern Area Incident Support Cache with the binding tape pulled free from the outer shell, exposing the protective Kevlar pads (Figure 1). The failure occurred after minor use. An additional pair of chain saw chaps (new, in packaging) was found at a separate cache with the binding tape stitching missing the outer shell layer, exposing the inner protective pads (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Binding not capturing inside shell, right leg.



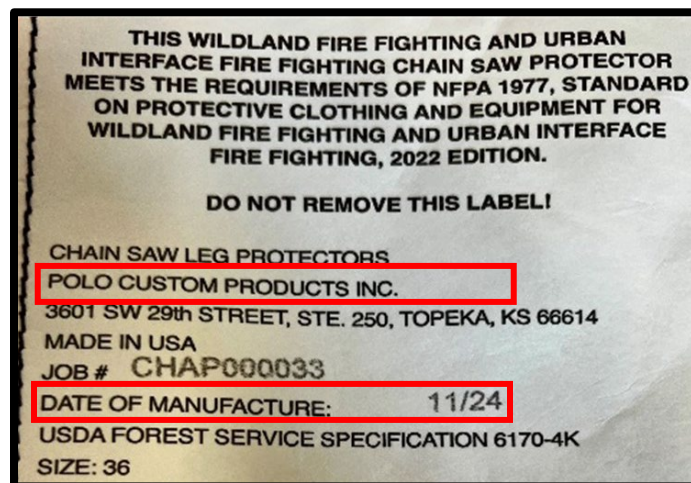
Figure 2: Binding not capturing outside shell, right leg.



Inspection:

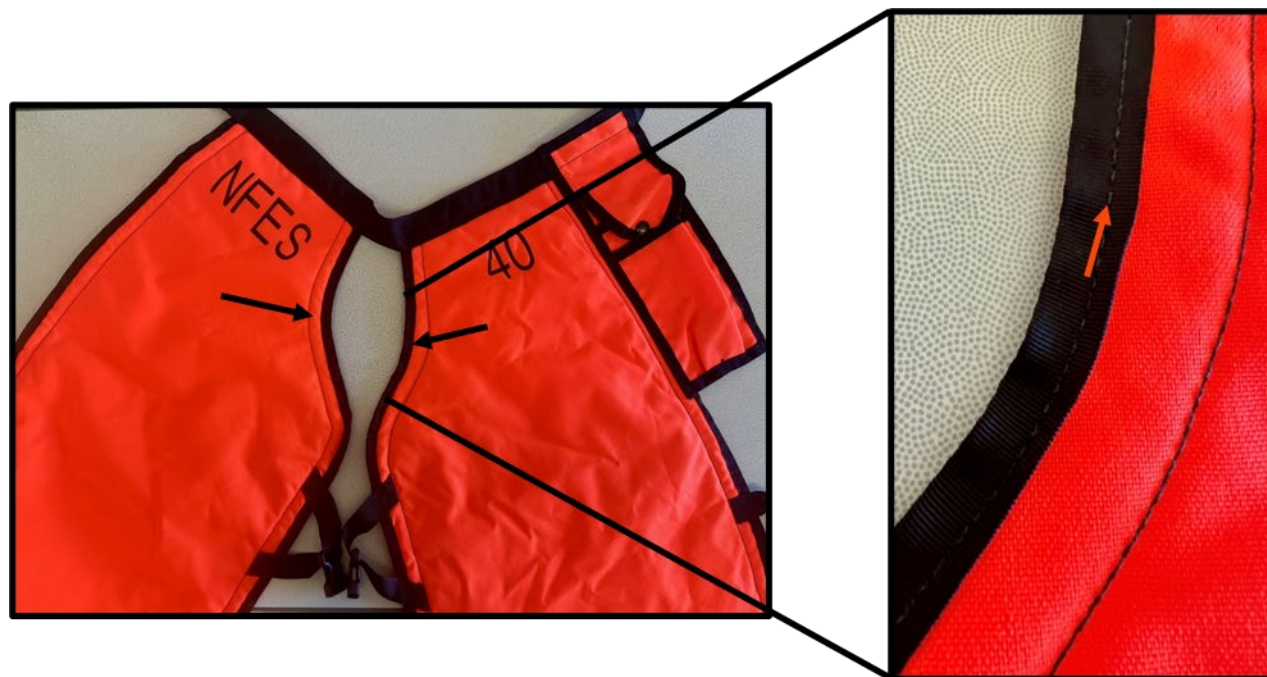
1. Confirm chaps were manufactured in 2024 or 2025 by Polo Custom Products Inc., see NFPA label on the inside of the left leg (Figure 3).

Figure 3: NFPA label.



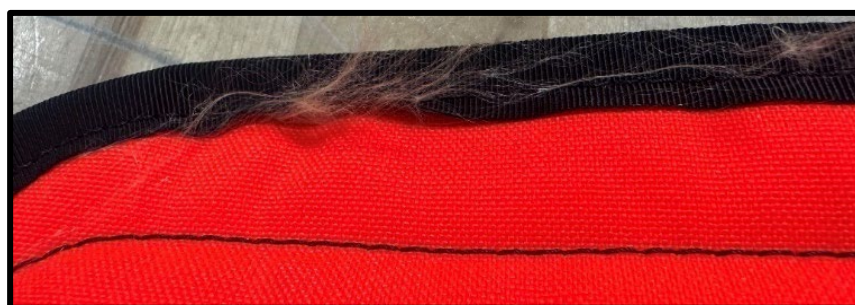
2. Inspect all binding tape to confirm the binding stitch line securely captures both the **front** and **back** shell (Figure 4), paying close attention to the curved inner leg. Lift the edge of the black binding tape to confirm the outer orange shell layers are captured by the stitching.

Figure 4: Front side of chain saw chaps. Black arrows showing the area of concern on the inner curve of leg. Orange arrows showing stitch line securing the binding tape.



Note: Kevlar fibers were found captured in the binding during preliminary inspections (Figure 5). These fibers are easily removed and will not affect the performance of the protective pad. This does not indicate a nonconformity if the binding tape has fully captured the outer shell layers.

Figure 5: Kevlar fibers captured in binding.



3. Remove chain saw chaps from service if the binding does not fully capture the outer shell layers.
4. Return any chaps with incorrectly sewn binding to the nearest cache. As stocking allows, caches will exchange for serviceable product. Cache locations can be found at:
<https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms449-1/nfes-national-interagency-support-caches>.

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