

NWCG Logistics/Equipment Management Committee (LMC)

National Fire Equipment System

Cache Memorandum: 26-01

July 10, 2026



To: National Interagency Support Caches

From: Nathan Hesse, Chair, Equipment/Technology Subcommittee (ETSC)

Subject: Non-Specification Fire Shelter Identification Update

Issue: A new version of non-specification fire shelters has been identified as of February 2026.

Action: National Interagency Support Caches (NISC) should remain vigilant for non-specification (counterfeit, non-approved, knockoff) fire shelters. Cache personnel should review the identification elements of non-specification fire shelters and use the Non-specification Fire Shelter Inspection Flowchart to prevent non-specification shelters from entering the NISC supply, being reissued, and compromising firefighter safety.

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

Background: NTDP has found non-specification fire shelters being sold on major online marketplaces, such as Amazon, Walmart, and eBay. [NWCG Equipment Technology Committee, 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. [ETC Safety Warning 25-001, Non-specific fire shelters](#) (January 10, 2025) revisited the non-specification fire shelter identification process. In 2026, new non-specification versions have emerged with features differing from the previous equipment warnings.

Additional Information: Non-specification shelter identification highlights (see flowchart and detailed inspection criteria below):

Carrying case:

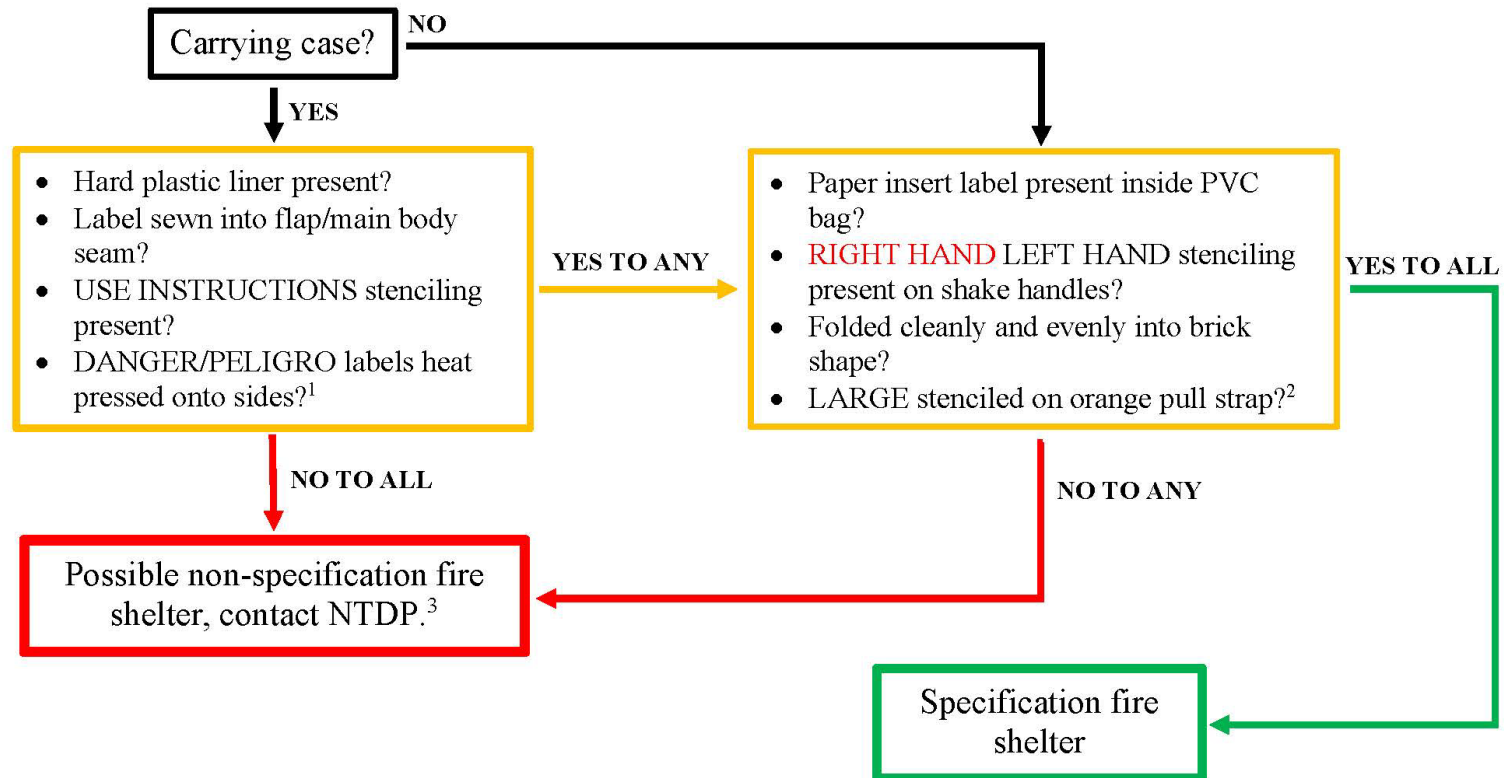
- USE INSTRUCTIONS not stenciled on pocket.
- Use instructions only in English without Spanish version on other side.
- DANGER/PELIGRO label sewn on instead of heat pressed. May have one, none, or both present. Note: this label is not present on all specification shelters; if present, will have both.
- Missing label sewn into main body/flap seam.
- Missing white hard plastic liner.

Fire shelter and pull strap:

- Orange pull strap missing LARGE stenciling.
- Shelter folded incorrectly, unevenly, poorly, and not in brick shape.
- No insert label inside polyvinyl chloride (PVC) bag.
- Shake handles missing RIGHT HAND (red text) LEFT HAND (black text) stenciling may be tucked into folds or not positioned at the top of the PVC bag.

NWCG standards are interagency by design; however, the decision to adopt and utilize them is made independently by the individual member agencies and communicated through their respective directives systems.

Non-Specification Fire Shelter Identification Flowchart



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

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

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

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 in 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.*

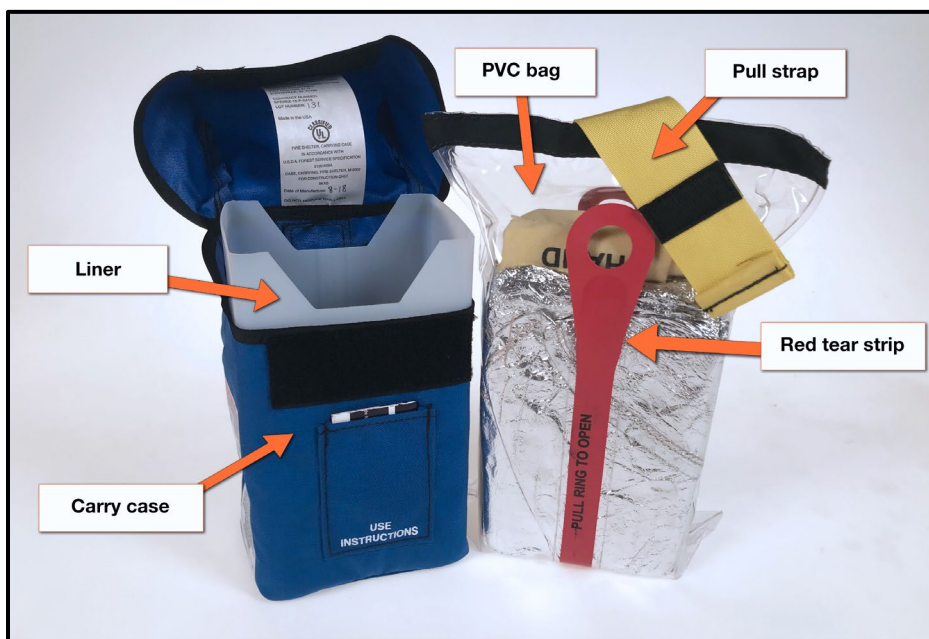


Figure 1: Size Regular specification fire shelter and carrying case with parts labeled.

Detailed inspection: 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, submit a description and photo using the form linked at the end of this memo.

1. Visual inspection.

Specification fire shelters fit easily into the fire shelter carrying case and liner with the carrying case flap closing 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, extend several inches above the liner, and make the carrying case flap difficult to close.

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 and they will be heat pressed on (no stitching).
 - Non-specification shelters 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 stitched on label.

- *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.
 - The non-specification carrying case does not have a sewn-in label, use lighter-weight fabric, and cannot stand on its own (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Specification 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 them (Figure 5).



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

- **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 fire shelters will have either a blue or orange insert label, and Regular 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"

- **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 all images, and non-specification shelters, right in all images, showing incorrect, sloppy folding and buried shake handles.



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

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

QR Code:



Contact: David Maclay-Schulte, Equipment Specialist, U.S. Forest Service, NTDP, at david.j.maclayschulte@usda.gov, or by phone (406) 329-3965 or (406) 396-4919.