

NWCG Fire Shelter and PPE Subcommittee

Meeting Agenda

0900-1100 Mountain, September 29, 2023 on Teams

Welcome and Introductions

Attendance: Carmen Thomason, Godot Apuzza, Heidi Foust, Eric Fransted, Ralph Gonzales, Clint Hamilton, David Maclay Schulte, Troy Phelps, Jay Tarley, Tom Pisarch, Bill Yohn.

Bill Yohn will be taking over as chair moving forward.

- Identify note taker-Carmen
- There is a link in the chat for Teams folders for document

Any additional agenda items or new business?

- NWCG News (Carmen Thomason)
 - New coordinators have been hired and there will be a slight change in who is assigned to each committee
- [Teams Folders](#)
- Fire Shelters
 - Non-spec status
 - The DOJ has declined the case to pursue the manufacturer the case was referred to the State of AZ and they have the ability to pursue the case if they would like.
 - “Gap” topic
 - DHS First Responder resource group is working on reviewing documents and it is similar to a life cycle evaluation. Considerations being in a sealed envelope, double occupancy and increased protection from water. Component evaluation is could also be included in this such as looking at each portion of the shelter not the entire product. Still in the process of the collaborative effort needs to continue. This could also be an opportunity to recruit a DHS person to ETC/fire shelter-PPE subcommittee as a liaison or to ask for an ETC person to represent the wildland community to the DHS First Responder group.
 - Shelter specifications package has been updated along with the materials tolerance package to DLA for contracting. Changes that were made were related to better testing and new technology. Testing has been updated to be annual to allow the manufacture time to get things in place and be able to stay on top of testing issued related to a year not to a contract cycle.
 - An additional company has come forward to start manufacturing shelters and information and testing protocols has been shared with them regarding specifications but more to come and they will have to respond to contracting.
 - Mystery ranch is still working on moving forward on their wear trial and the bag type for a potential new fold. They could go to each agencies and ask the employees to wear test if they keep moving forward and to have an alternative folding method then it would come back to NWCG and a Red Book change. It

would be a specification and a drawing change for a new fold style. When testing starts need to brief the EB.

- Respirators
 - DRAFT Bulletin
 - IMRR PowerPoint-shared in email and on the call
 - There are respirators that are being marketed for wildland fire and there is interest in the product the question becomes are the appropriate or safe for fire line use. There is a person from OSHA who has been tasked with review and concerns have been brought forward about consulting with the states and the federal agencies for evaluation of this product. There have been some wear trails and one recently in LA county. More data is still needed to evaluate this product and it is a challenge. Other considerations are medical standards as well as carbon monoxide associated with respirator protection and monitoring for that specifically. There remain a lot of questions and data needed to assess this reporter. This will need to be taken on as a specific project as it has a lot of reach into the fire community as well as the technology and standards behind respirators. There are also concerns about how to communicate about this issue of smoke to firefighters as well as managers and how to identify smoke as a risk and the associated mitigations that can link back to the respirator issue.
 - Players in this issue include OSHA, NFPA, NIOSH and it is important to ensure that all the right people are included in discussion and sharing their concerns.
 - Nothing is approved yet and concerns have been shared that this is not a single issue that firefighters depending on the type of fire and fuel type need different types of respirator protection.
 - Another issue is the long-term situation about smoke and collecting data about people how have been exposed for years and what the different data that comes out of that and this could be a multi-year process. If smoke is the known hazard it also has implications to other responders outside the arduous firefighter, does this imply reparatory protection for camp or IMT members?
 - Discussion on is there need to do some type of safety warning or alert on this product/ issue. The message from NFPA is that responders need analyze a product and see if it meets their responder needs. Consideration for the time of year for an alert or safety message and its relationship to fire season and RX burning. The red book is also currently open for updates and language could be submitted to that change. The NWCG Executive Board could also be asked if they would send out a message about firefighter health and welfare, RMC or ETC are also known and trusted sources for these types of safety alerts or bulletins, links to additional information could be included in a safety message. This message needs to address the who, what firefighters and the conditions, can we provide any options of products, what the policy is. What can be done now or not? Define what a respirator is or is not and it is not an N95 mask or an SCBA.

Next Call:

FY24 NWCG Fire Shelter and PPE Subcommittee Conf. Calls/Meeting Schedule

First Quarter – Thursday December 14, 2023

Second Quarter – Thursday March 14, 2024

Third Quarter – Thursday June 13, 2024

Fourth Quarter – Thursday September 12, 2024

Pattern: Third month of each quarter (December, March, June, September), second Thursday, 0900-1100 MT.