

Fire Shelter and PPE Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes FINAL

October 29, 2020

Meeting began at 0900 via MS Teams

- Practice Fire shelter use during Covid-19 - Disinfecting protocols – Tony P. provided a draft document for disinfecting protocols after working with NIOSH and other public health experts. He is looking for the group’s input and approval. He’s suggesting that agencies determine if they are going to do practice shelter deployments or not due to Covid-19. Some may choose to use old shelters and throw away or use practice shelters and then let them sit for a few days and/or disinfect them.

Action Item: All members should look at the draft and get comments back to Tony ASAP. Tony will post final on the FSPPE website and WFSTAR, and work with NWCG to reference them in the FMB memo.

- Fire Shelter Refresher training video update – Reviewed training booklet and video. Looking to update booklet first. May end up an electronic document with several links or keep it as a printed booklet. Still looking at different formats.

Action Item: - Subcommittee to look at the booklet and get comments back to Tony.
Due Date: Friday, Nov 6, 2020

- Boot update – The Military was evaluating an Air Force boot for military deployments. They have settled on a boot used on flight lines by the US Air Force. It does not exactly meet the NWCG boot standard because it is not 100% leather. There are various standards for boots and this complicates the issue. The USFS San Dimas is looking at scoping a Sawyer Boot project that may expand to evaluate wildland boots in general. All agreed the FSPPE Subcommittee should provide input in the scoping phase. The project will start in 2021 and Godot Apuzzo will probably be the lead. This is a big long-term multi-year project. Issues crossover on policy issue, materials issue, field input, prototypes, testing, evaluating, OSHA. This committee should be involved.

Action Item: – Ralph Gonzales and Godot Apuzzo will keep the FSPPE Subcommittee informed and involved in the start-up process of this project.

- Helmet Update – Godot is evaluating new helmet styles to help alleviate heat stress issues on the fireline. Survey went to the field to look at helmet impacts, retention, use, efficiency, preferences, etc. That information will guide the testing process for new designs.
- Respirator update - A new respirator standards for “wildland fire and urban interface” will be out shortly from NFPA 1984 committee. It will be a tiered standard. Tier 1- Particulate matter, Tier 2 – particulates with vapors and gasses, and Tier 3 - particulates with vapors and gases plus vapors and gases found in urban interface. They left Carbon Monoxide (CO) as optional because it is an issue for a wildfire respirator standard. Overall CO exposure for WLFs is very low, but it does spike throughout a shift. A problem with trying to monitor this is that the monitors aren’t designed for turning on

and off throughout a shift, they have to be on all day. They will allow agencies through Risk Management to decide what CO protection they want.

- New DOI Rep on NFPA 1984 - Joe D. recommends appointing Corey Butler be the new DOI Rep on that committee. She has supervisor approval and is willing to serve in this capacity. The FSPPE supports and approves this idea. Welcome, Corey and Thanks!
- DOI Rep for NFPA 1977 – Clothing. Bill Yohn is RJ Johnson’s alternative on this committee.
- Review fire shelter deployment for 2020 - lessons learned

California

- North complex - Inmate crew deployment in CA. while defending a structure. Sought refuge in their bus during the burnover. Conditions in the bus worsened and presented toxic gases. They exited the bus and took refuge in a nearby home. Three inmates forgot their packs on the bus including their fire shelters. The structure caught fire and became untenable. They exited structure and deployed shelters. Three had to double up. A total of 15 deployments (14 crewmembers and 1 captain). No injuries. One was evaluation of smoke inhalation and released.

-Gold Fire – Local government Engine crew deployed after vehicle died and became inoperable. They exited vehicle as conditions worsened and deployed shelters. Incident resulted in minor burn injuries.

-Glass fire - 2 Dozer swampers deployed. No injuries.

-Dolan Fire - Two engines companies with 12 total personnel plus 1 night DIVS and 2 dozer operators were protecting fire station when conditions deteriorated quickly. They deployed in the middle of fire station compound. Thirteen total personnel took refuge in 12 fire shelters (2 people shared a shelter). The 2 dozer operators did not deploy. They were in shelters for 25-30 minutes while crew barracks, personal vehicles, engines, Heavy Equipment and station all caught fire and burned. The surrounding vegetation cooled off first while the structures and vehicles remained on fire and they eventually left shelters and ran into the cooled vegetation. One ff had extensive burn injuries with an extended stay at a burn center. A few others had minor burn injuries and smoke inhalation.

Montana

-Bridger foothills – Three FFTR’s deployed shelters in early September. More to follow when the incident report is released.

To date in 2020 – 35 personnel took refuge in 28 deployed fire shelters on 5 incidents.

- Website updates – All safety alerts are migrating to the NWCG website. This includes Safety, Aviation, Equipment, Fuels, Weather alerts. The goal is to house them all in one spot with a good search mechanism.

Action Item – Tony P – The FSPPE subcommittee how will share “Tech Tips” on our NWCG website. Tony will work with Nancy at NWCG.

Action Item – Godot Apuzzo – Godot will work with Nancy at NWCG to move helmet information from ETC website to the FSPPE subcommittee.

---- This action item is complete as of 30 October. The FSPPE webpage will house the helmet information. The ETC webpage will also continue to house the same helmet information until after fire refresher, 2021. This is to ensure FLA readers get directed to the correct hyperlink attached to a helmet strike report (SOG Fire Rock Strike) recently released (29 October 2020) through the Lessons Learned Center.

Nice Job Godot!!!!

Action Item - Ted will update the FSPPE Roster. Changes submitted to Nancy on 11/1/2020. Updates made on 11/10/2020.

- Women’s fire pants – Tony P and David Schulte are involved with the ongoing evaluation of various designs for women (and unisex) nomex pants. Covid-19 slowed down the testing. We have two prototype pants. Made 120 for field testing. The manufacturer closed for Covid-19 but opened back up in June. Two prototypes were shipped out to the field for testing in July. Feedback is being received via survey monkey. 48 responses so far. Tony will reach out for more feedback before moving forward.
- Sawyer boots – New project scoping for 2021 will probably expand to include all wildland fire boots. See Boots above.
- Flight helmets – nothing to report right now.
- Select a Chair – Eric Fransted was nominated and approved as the new chair. Thank you, Eric, for stepping up! AFTER MEETING Update: RJ Johnson will no longer be listed as the Vice-Chair. He will stay on the subcommittee as an advisor/SME.
- Bin items –
Matt Cnuddle – FYI items
-First Aid Kits – Working on status of personal first aid kit with the Emergency Medical Committee. DLA first aid kits will be phasing out aspirin.
-Will soon get a request for input on changes to the DLA catalog. Please send input on changes to Matt for consolidation by Friday, November 9th.

Tony Petrilli – FYI items

– Working with NIOSH on evaluating toxins in dirty wildland firefighter clothing. Still gathering data.

-Updated minor designs modifications for fire shelters were sent to DLA and they are going into production soon. The PVC bag now has a small slit in it to aid in opening the bag. We also need to retrofit the “slit” in the shelters in the cache this winter before next fire season.

ADDED in notes after the meeting:

From Lauren Murphy

I should have caught this sooner, but it would be beneficial for our Clothing and Textiles (C&T) team to be part of this committee going forward. C&T manages the boots, they are potentially assuming management for the helmets and they would also be the POC for the women's pants. The POC is Ted Kelly / Edward.Kelly@dla.mil.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE IN LATE JANUARY OR EARLY FEBRUARY. Eric Fransted will send out email invite.

Meeting adjourned.