



NOTES FROM CREWS THAT HAD TO DEPLOY SHELTERS

FIRE SHELTER USE

Student Information Sheet 4203.5-1

1. Fire shelters must be carried where they can be easily reached and removed without taking off your pack. Shelters should never be carried inside a pack. Practice removal with all your gear on the same way it will be carried on the fireline. Practice removing your shelter while running or walking fast.
2. Once an entrapment becomes likely protecting your airway should dominate all your decisions while attempting to escape or deploy shelters.
3. Always attempt escape where success is likely.
4. When escape is questionable your first priority is to take your forest fire shelter out of the carrying case and remove the plastic bag by pulling the pull-tab. Carry the folded shelter in your hands ready for quick use. While trying to escape it can be partially opened to use as a heat shield against radiant heat but not for hot gases or a flame front which would leave your airways unprotected. When speed is essential for escape get rid of all your tools, saws, packs, etc., to travel as light as possible.
5. It is critical, whether trying to escape or when finding and improving deployment sites, to leave sufficient time to get under your shelter before hot gases or the flame front arrives. It is more important to be on the ground before the hot gases and flame front arrive than to be in your shelter. Finish deployment on the ground as rapidly as possible, if you only get partially deployed, protect your head and airway with your shelter as a top priority.
6. Prior to arrival of the flame front the air is often very turbulent. This results in longer deployment times and the necessity to hold your shelter tightly, so it is not blown away or damaged.
7. Movement of people after they deploy, but prior to adequate dissipation of heat and smoke hazards, is contributing to the number of fatalities and serious injuries. Once you deploy stay under the shelter. **No matter how bad it is under the shelter the heat can be 10-20 times worse outside the shelter.**



FIRE CREW FIREFIGHTER TRAINING

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FIRE SHELTERS

8. If trapped without a shelter, lie face down with arms curled around your head no matter how bad your back is being burned. This is your best chance to survive. It is always hotter above ground level than at ground level, so keep your nose and body pressed to the ground.
9. If you are under the fire shelter and the inner layer of glass cloth starts to separate from the aluminum foil, the glass cloth may burn you but it will cool off rapidly. If this occurs it is critical that you remain under the shelter and keep movement to a minimum since the foil can now be torn easily. Even if the foil breaks open and flames enter it is still worse outside the shelter. When conditions are so extreme that the fire shelter starts to fail, severe injury and death are very likely if you leave the shelter. **You can still survive if you stay under the shelter.**



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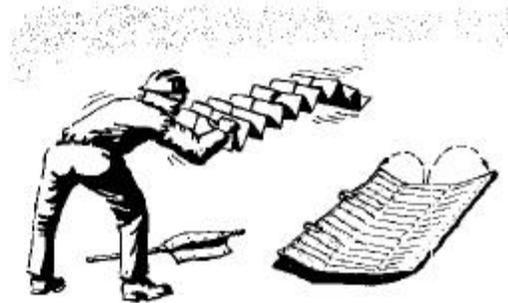
FIRE SHELTERS

DON'T PANIC

Student Information Sheet 4203.5-2

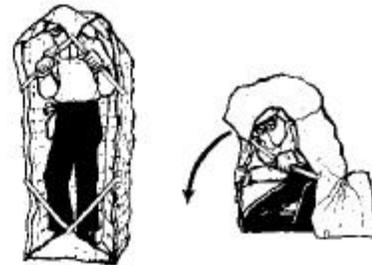
•Don't Panic

- 1 •Stay together with crew
- Pick largest available clearing
- Avoid Heavy fuels, snags, power lines
- Find bare spot
- Cut trenches or toe holds in steep terrain
- Burn or scrap away flammable litter if time permits



- 2 •Remove shelter from case
- Shake out

- 3 •Grasp edge and shake open



- 4 •Enter in an upright position
- Lay face down, feet toward oncoming fire

- 5 •Hold front & rear flaps down with hands and feet
- Maintain seal around bottom edge
- Avoid contact between shelter and body
- Keep sides spread wide for best protection
- Keep face pressed to ground
- If it gets hot, take shallow breaths through nose
- Can drink water but do not wet handkerchief
- Maintain communications with rest of crew



- Do not open plastic bag until shelter is needed for emergency use
- After fire has cooled, pick safest area and await help
- Watch for falling snags and rolling rock



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INSTRUCTIONS

Student Information Sheet 4203.5-3

