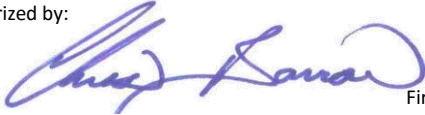
	TRAVIS COUNTY ESD #5 MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE	<h1 style="text-align: center;">A404</h1>
	Department Best Practices Authorized by:  Fire Chief Chris Barron	
<h2>Use of Fire Shelters</h2>		Reference: AFD A404
		Application: Shift Personnel

I. Purpose

To establish a policy addressing the appropriate inspection, training, use and storage of fire shelters.

II. Background

The fire shelter has been required equipment for federal wildland firefighters since 1977. Since that time, fire shelters have saved the lives of more than 300 firefighters and have prevented hundreds of serious injuries. The fire shelter should be used as a last resort if planned escape routes or safety zones become inadequate and entrapment is imminent. Carrying a fire shelter should never be considered an alternative to safe firefighting.

To increase firefighter safety, *Manchaca Fire/Rescue has issued each member a fire shelter.*

This document is a direct adaptation of the Austin Fire Department SOG on Brush Truck Operations. It has been adopted by Manchaca Fire Rescue as an Auto Aid partner to maximize standardization between partner agencies. Variations and additions to the language from the parent AFD document will be signified by text in italics. Generic changes that do not affect content such as formatting and changing "AFD" to "MFR" will not be noted.

III. Policy

- A. **Assigned shelters.** *Each member of MFR is issued a fire shelter. It is each member's responsibility to respond with their fire shelter to wildfire incidents as a part of their wildland PPE. Members should periodically inspect their shelter as required by policy.*
- B. **Storage of shelters.** *Fire Shelters will be stored with the member's wildland PPE in the supplied harness.*

- C. **Wearing of the fire shelter.** Fire Shelters will be worn by all personnel responding on a grass fire, wildland incident or prescribed fire operation. *Apparatus* drivers will keep the fire shelter close by while driving the unit.

- D. **Training.** Annual fire shelter refresher training is required for every firefighter. Annual training will be coordinated *through the department training calendar* and include the following:
 - 1. **Video.** Viewing the fire shelter video.
 - 2. **Hands on training.** Hands on training, including practice evolutions.

IV. Best Practices

The following best practices should be followed at all firefighting and emergency scene operations, except where deviation can be justified by Fire Officers. Any significant deviation should be communicated to responding/on-scene units as soon as possible.

- A. **Use of fire shelter.** The fire shelter should be used as a last resort if planned escape routes or safety zones become inadequate and entrapment is imminent. When deploying a shelter, consider the following:
 - 1. **Deployment site.** A deployment site should be as far away from combustibles as possible to minimize flame contact with the shelter. It is not advisable to deploy on an open roadway due to traffic. Look for overhead items that could fall. If time permits, scrape away ground fuels to mineral soil in an area a minimum of 4 X 8 feet.
 - 2. **Needed items.** Items other than a radio, water bottle, gloves and helmet should be thrown away from the deployment site. Roll up collars and ensure no skin is exposed.
 - 3. **Deployment time.** Keep in mind that it takes 15 to 20 seconds to deploy a shelter under ideal conditions, and longer in turbulent winds.
 - 4. **Positioning in shelter.** Firefighters should lie face down with their head away from (feet toward) the oncoming flames.
 - 5. **Water use.** Do not use water to wet clothing inside the fire shelter.

6. **Communication.** If possible, contact Command with emergency radio traffic or emergency ID activation (refer to MFR Policy B402 Emergency Terminology and B403 Emergency ID Activation).
 7. **Exiting the shelter.** Be sure the fire has passed prior to exiting the shelter. Many firefighters have died because they left their shelter too early.
- B. **Fire shelter inspection.** *Individual fire shelters will be inspected in conjunction with the weekly check for the brush truck. Any defects or damage found should immediately be reported to a member of the PPE maintenance staff.*
1. **Abrasion damage.** Remove the shelter from service if extensive edge abrasion is present, if aluminum particles have turned the clear plastic bag dark gray or black, or if the bottom of the bag has debris. All of these problems are signs of serious abrasion.
 2. **Tears.** Look for tears along the folded edges. Remove shelters from service when tears are longer than ¼ inch.
 3. **Reporting damage.** Any defects or damage found should immediately be reported *to a member of the PPE maintenance staff* for replacement.