

Michigan Department of Natural Resources	Procedure Forest, Mineral and Fire Management	NO. 133
		Approved: March 3, 2009

SUBJECT: Nomex Fire Retardant Suits/Fire Shelters/Protective Clothing

POLICY: It shall be the policy of Forest Mineral and Fire Management to issue nomex fire retardant suits and forest fire shelters to all Division fire control personnel, including Michigan Wildland Firefighters, and to require nomex suits to be worn and fire shelters carried while working on the control and suppression of either a wildland or prescribed fire. Those individuals involved in cold weather prescribed burning can request additional nomex apparel, such as oversized nomex clothing and nomex brush coats, through their chain of command to accommodate those conditions. All nomex worn by Department employees and Michigan Wildland Fire Fighters will comply with the National Fire Protection Association standard 1977 by having retro reflective material on both leg and sleeve cuffs in a manner as to provide 360 degree coverage.

Personnel working on wildland or prescribed fires must wear long sleeved shirts and long pants under their nomex suit to help protect from radiant heat whenever weather conditions will allow. It is recommended that this practice be followed at all times if possible. The only exception will be when the threat of heat exhaustion/stroke due to very high ambient temperatures outweighs the need for the additional thermal protection (such as mop up when ambient temperatures are very high). This decision will be left up to each individual firefighter. In addition, approved hard hats (yellow for non-supervisors and white for supervisors), leather gloves, 8 inch laced up boots and protective eyewear will be worn on all wildland and prescribed fires to help provide protection from exposure to flames, radiant heat and embers.

PURPOSE: Nomex clothing prevents the ignition of clothing from short periods of exposure to radiant heat and provides a limited amount of protection from the exposure of the body to radiant heat. The nomex material is resistant to burning at high temperatures and personnel must be aware that severe radiant burns could result long before the nomex material would burn. When removed from actual contact with flame, nomex will not independently support combustion. The yellow suits also provide increased visibility to aircraft and could assist in directing an employee to safe area.

Fire Shelters are considered an essential fireline safety item that can

help insure survival should a firefighter become trapped by fire. Employees must be trained in the use of the fire shelter if maximum benefits are to be derived. The shelter must be carried and immediately available in order to prevent or reduce the severity of burns or to provide some chance of survival under the worst of conditions. Supervision must stress safety and good judgment in fire control at all times.

RELATED PROCEDURES: 121 Safety

WHO	DOES WHAT
Unit Manager/Asst. Unit Manager for Resource Protection	Inspects clothing and fire shelters turned in for replacement and approves replacement if needed. Provides annual required training in the safe deployment of fire shelters. Insures compliance with this policy at the local Unit level.
District Managers and Field Coordinators	Insures compliance and consistency across Districts and throughout the state.
Resource Protection Manager	Insures that all personnel utilized by the Division in wildland fire control and prescribed fire are equipped with proper nomex clothing, fire shelters, hard hats, safety boots and protective eyewear. Requests for this PPE will be forwarded to the Resource Protection Manager through the chain of command.