Notice

Some Hardhats Showing Cracks

The Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) has received reports of cracking in hardhats. So far the cracks have been found in Bullard Wildfire helmets (FH911C and FH911H) manufactured since 2008. Some of the hardhats were barely used.

All of the hardhats have been removed from service and some have been sent to Bullard for evaluation. Bullard's initial finding was that the hardhats had been exposed to solvents, but the company is doing intensive investigation. The users of the newest hardhats stated that to the best of their knowledge the hardhats were not exposed to solvents while in the possession of their program. MTDC would like to be informed if additional hardhats are found with similar or unexplained damage. If you encounter these problems, please contact Dennis Davis at the MTDC: 406–329–3929.

These reports serve as a reminder of important inspection and maintenance requirements:

- Regular inspection of your hardhat is essential. Inspection guidelines are located at the end of this document.
- Polycarbonate wildland fire hardhats are susceptible to damage from solvents. Do not store hardhats in direct sunlight or in the same room or vehicle compartment with gasoline, diesel, or other solvents. Clean with mild soap and warm water only.

In most cases, wildland fire suppression personal protective equipment should be purchased through the General Services Administration (GSA) Wildland Fire Equipment Catalog (FSH 6309.32 and FAR 8.002). When equipment is purchased directly from a vendor instead of through GSA, it is likely that the price will be higher, and any warranty issues must be resolved between the purchaser and the vendor.

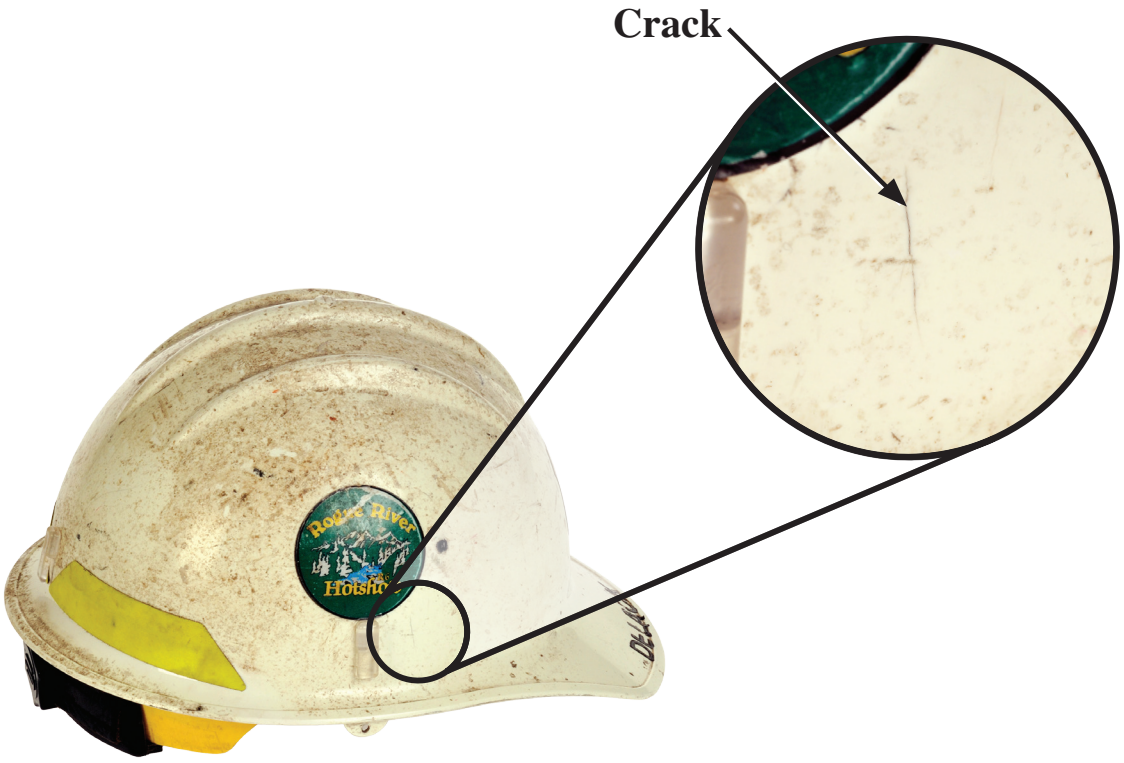
If you purchase equipment from GSA and have a quality issue, you can submit a Quality Deficiency Report (QDR) form and GSA can investigate the problem. Instructions for downloading and submitting a QDR form are in the GSA Wildland Fire Equipment Catalog at <http://www.gsa.gov/graphics/fas/WildlandFire2011Catalog.pdf> under the heading, "Reporting Discrepancies."

Inspection

Both the hardhat's shell and suspension system must be inspected frequently for signs of wear and degradation. Field personnel who wear hardhats should check them at least monthly, if not more frequently.

The shell should be inspected routinely for dents, cracks, nicks, gouges, and any damage that might reduce protection. Any hardhat that shows signs of worn or damaged parts should be removed from service immediately.

The shell material may be degrading if the shell becomes stiff, brittle, faded, or appears dull or chalky. With further degradation, the shell's surface may flake or delaminate. A hardhat should be replaced at the first sign of any of these conditions. A hardhat should also be removed from service when it has received a substantial blow from an object or the ground.



Here is a simple hardhat inspection checklist for field employees and supervisors.

- Remove and clean the suspension system and headband.
- Inspect the suspension system closely for cracks, cut or frayed straps, torn headband or size adjustment slots, loss of pliability, or other signs of wear. Remove and replace any suspension system that is damaged.
- Clean the shell as needed with mild soap and warm water. Do not use solvents or abrasives.
- Compress the shell from both sides about 1 inch with your hands and then release the pressure. The shell should return to its original shape quickly, exhibiting elasticity. Compare the elasticity with that of a new shell. If the shell being tested does not have as much elasticity as the new shell, or if the shell cracks, it should be replaced immediately.