

# Fire Tech Tips

United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service



Technology &  
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## 55-Gallon Drinking Water Bag

*Kevin Lee, Forestry Technician*

Missoula Technology & Development Center (MTDC) has developed a new concept for delivering up to 55 gallons (208 l) of drinking water to the fireline. It incorporates a standardized system consisting of an outer bag/replaceable inner liner and color-coding to indicate the intended use. Water to be used for drinking comes in bags color-coded blue. Additionally, the bags are clearly marked "DRINKING WATER ONLY."

The 55-gallon drinking water bag is constructed of a heavy duty nylon duck outer bag, a replaceable plastic inner liner (which is FDA certified for potable water), and connecting straps with a metal O-ring, allowing for helicopter long line remote hook transport. The 55-

gallon water bag can be carried full by type III or larger helicopters, even in high density altitude situations. Also, the ring can be used as a securing point to ensure the bag doesn't slide or roll down steep hillsides. Two bags will fit side by side in the rear of a pickup bed, allowing for transport and refill without removing the bags.

The 55-gallon drinking water bag presents many benefits to cache management. It requires much less storage space than a comparable volume of cubitainers, and refurbishment is easy, fast, and cost-effective. A clean, safe drinking water supply is guaranteed because the inner liner can be disposed of and replaced by a new, inexpensive liner; the liner should be replaced whenever the quality of the water



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is in question, or contamination is suspected. The same is true whenever a leaky liner is encountered: **replace**, don't repair.

The bags come with the accessories needed to refill canteens and 1- and 5-gallon drinking water bags. Also, fittings and detailed instructions are provided for attaching filler hoses, avoiding the possibility of dirty hoses coming in contact with the drinking water supply. Accessories, fittings, and instructions can be found in the bag's external pocket.

The 55-gallon drinking water bag and replacement liners are available through GSA and NFES fire caches. NSN and NFES numbers are:

Description	NSN
55-gallon Drinking Water Bag	8465-01-369-3557 (NFES #0435)
55-gallon Drinking Water Liner	8465-01-369-2147 (NFES #0436)

For further information, contact

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