

# FACT SHEET



FS No. 37-086-0521

## MANAGING WATER-ACTIVATED RATION HEATERS FROM MEALS, READY-TO-EAT

The following information is based on Federal criteria; host nation, State, and military installation regulations may be more stringent.

### BACKGROUND

The traditional flameless ration heaters (FRHs), NSN 8970-01-321-9153, are flat pads included within meal, ready-to-eat (MRE) ration packages. They contain a mixture of magnesium-5% iron alloy, silicon dioxide, sodium chloride, and sodium tripolyphosphate, which produces an exothermic reaction when water is added. Activated FRHs are designed to heat the accompanying meal to a temperature of 100°F in 12 minutes. On occasion, Soldiers consume individual MREs without activating the accompanying FRH. The unused FRHs have no value to the Soldier and are typically discarded or collected for turn-in to the supporting installation environmental office.

### REGULATORY STATUS

In a letter, dated 29 October 2004, to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health), Mr. Raymond J. Fatz, from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), made the following clarifications:

- **Single FRH** - Unused or used FRHs disposed of by individual Soldiers in the field, or a residential setting, may be discarded as general solid waste under the household hazardous waste (HW) exclusion in 40 Code of Federal Regulations 261.4(b)(1). This exclusion also applies to FRHs that are collected from a group of Soldiers for disposal or reuse, as long as the FRHs were initially issued to a Soldier for individual use.
- **Multiple, Unused MREs Containing FRHs** - Waste MREs containing FRHs that were **not** issued to Soldiers are not eligible for the household HW exclusion because the waste MREs were not generated by individuals; however, the EPA determined that waste MREs containing FRHs are not an HW under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and may be disposed as general solid waste.
- **Multiple, Unused FRHs** - Multiple, unused FRHs **not** packaged with MREs and that have **not** been issued to a Soldier present an environmental hazard and must be managed as a RCRA D003 reactive HW when disposed. Contact the environmental office for waste collection and disposal instructions.



Source: U.S. Army,  
APHC Photo by COL  
Alick Smith

### LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

Because these guidelines are from the Federal EPA, local regulations may be stricter. Contact the supporting environmental office for more information.

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