



TechData Sheet

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Protecting Electronic Media from Fire Damage

BACKGROUND

In 1982, the Federal Government discontinued procurement of GSA-approved Class 1 and Class 2 security file cabinets. These cabinets were insulated and designed to protect paper against the effects of a typical structure fire. A combination of the high cost of insulated security containers and the transition from the paper to computer media led to the elimination of the requirement for this product. GSA-approved Class 1 and 2 file cabinets do not protect computer media against the effects of a structure fire.

Until recently, the only ways to adequately protect information stored on computer media (floppy disks, CD ROM disks, magnetic tape, etc.) were to store it in a vault or copy the information and store it at a remote location. These options can be inconvenient and time consuming, especially if the media is classified or sensitive.

DISCUSSION

Fire resistant containers are now available to protect computer media. They are called **Media Protection Containers** (MPC). Containers that fall into this category are specifically designed to protect computer media from fire use a process called "ablativ cooling" to provide the necessary level of fire protection. Some MPCs are small enough to fit within the drawer of a GSA-approved (legal size) Class 5 or Class 6 security file cabinet (see Figure 1). Media protection containers, when used in conjunction with GSA-approved security containers, provide a convenient and economical method of protecting classified or sensitive computer media from fire, theft, and compromise.

The DoD Lock Program staff conducted an industry survey of commercially available MPCs that would fit into a drawer of legal size drawer of a GSA-approved Class 5 or Class 6 security file cabinet. Ten containers were selected for the test.

Each container was tested in accordance with Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) Standard 72, "Test for Record Protection Equipment." The applicable test level that applies to digital media is "Class-125," which specifies a maximum allowable exposure temperature of 125°F.

Only three of the ten containers tested met the test requirements and of those, only two were able to do so without supplemental protection. Both of these containers were manufactured by Media Protection Products, Inc. The third container, manufactured by Sentry, passed the test only when enclosed in a custom-made fabric sleeve.

CONCLUSIONS

The Fire Cooler 1000 and the Fire Cooler 1100, manufactured by Media Protection Products, Inc. met the fire protection requirements of UL 72, Class 125. Both are easy to use as a stand-alone system or in the drawer of a GSA-approved file cabinet. The ceramic fabric sleeve used with the



Figure 1. Fire Cooler 1000 inside security cabinet.

Sentry MPC is not considered practical for general office use and would be difficult to use if stored in a GSA-approved security file cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Media protection containers should be considered whenever classified or other important information is stored on computer media. A number of containers and systems are available to meet fire protection requirements for media that does not need to be stored in a GSA-approved security container. Information on these products is available from the DoD Lock Program Technical Support Hotline. The Fire Cooler Model 1000 and Model 1100 are the only stand-alone containers found that meet the requirements of UL 72, Class 125 and also fit into the drawer of a legal size GSA-approved security file cabinet. Storage capacities for the Fire Cooler container are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Fire Cooler Storage Capacities

Media	Quantity
Iomega Zip 100	32
3-1/2" Disks	100
CD-ROM (in sleeves)	66

PRODUCT AVAILABILITY

Price and ordering information for the Fire Cooler Models 1000 and 1100 is available from:

Address:

Media Protection Products, Inc.
2495 Main Street, Suite 547
Buffalo, NY 14214

Phone: (800) 445-3309

E-mail: CUSTSVCS@FIRECOOLER.COM

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information on fire resistant containers and updated product testing, contact the

DoD Lock Program Technical Support Hotline at:

Phone: (800) 290-7607 / (805) 982-1212 /

DSN: 551-1212

E-mail:

W_NAVFAC_DOD_Lock_Program_Support@navy.mil
