

ECWCS Gen I

The first generation of the Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (ECWCS, pronounced ek-wax) features a Gore-tex parka and trousers, with the outer fabric matching the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU), usually woodland camouflage. The layered system includes everything from underwear worn next to the skin to a white over-layer for snow conditions.



Soldier wearing ECWCS Generation I, 1988 reference photo.

ECWCS parkas, trousers and other elements are widely available as surplus/militaria or as commercial equivalents or substitutes. When buying, pay careful attention to the specifications to make sure what you purchase is either military issue or meets the same government specifications.

Generation I of the Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (Gen I ECWCS)

The first generation of the Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (ECWCS) was fielded in the mid-1980s, replacing the parkas, over-trousers, and other garments that had been the mainstay of cold weather uniforms since the 1950s. Even though updated in the 1960s and 1970s, the legacy garments did not take advantage of advances in materials and science. ECWCS will protect the wearer in a broad temperature range, from +40° F to -60° F using layers that can be worn in the right combination for the expected conditions. The layers use materials designed to draw perspiration away from skin and to move the water to the outer layer for evaporation.

Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (ECWCS) Generation I may be further defined in terms of the following five primary layers (including the overwhites, when necessary) and accessories:

- Layer 1: Undershirt and drawers
- Layer 2: Bib overall, cold weather shirt and trouser liner
- Layer 3: Coat liner and field trousers
- Layer 4: Extended cold weather camouflage parka and trousers
- Layer 5: Snow camouflage parka and trousers (overwhites)

In addition, ECWCS accessories include necessary handwear, headwear, footwear, and suspenders to complete the system. Layers I through 4 should always be worn. The bib overalls

In layer 2 are normally worn for temperatures below -25° F. Layer 5 is worn when snow camouflage is required. The white boots should only be worn for temperatures below -20° F.

The ECWCS inner layers are made from fabrics that draw perspiration away from the skin (wicking). The Layer 4 Parka and Trousers are made of Gore-tex, a material that repels outside water while allowing perspiration to be evaporated.

ECWCS Gen I Components

Components of the Generation I ECWCS are presented in this table:

Layer	Item	Spec/Notes	NSN Range
1	Undershirt, Cold Weather, Polypropylene	MIL-U-44164. Brown color, moisture wicking turtleneck with center front, half-length zipper. New for ECWCS.	8415-01-227-9547 to 8415-01-475-4271, non-consecutive, seven sizes
1	Drawers, Cold Weather, Polypropylene	MIL-D-44165. Brown color, moisture wicking, full length. New for ECWCS.	8415-01-227-9542 to 8415-01-475-4561, non-consecutive for seven sizes
2	Shirt, Cold Weather, Synthetic Fiberpile	MIL-S-44163. 100% Polyester. Brown color, with reinforced shoulder and elbow patches, a convertible turtleneck collar, front zipper, elastic drawcord waist, hook and pile cuff tabs, two chest cargo style pockets, and two lower handwarmer pockets. Called the "bear shirt" or "bear suit" when combined with the overalls. Warm but restrictive. New for ECWCS.	8415-01-228-1353 to 8415-01-228-1357 depending on size
2	Overalls, Bib, Cold Weather, Fiberpile	MIL-O-44191. 100% Polyester. Brown color, with elastic suspenders, front quick release buckles, and full length zippers at the side seams. New for ECWCS.	8415-01-228-1323 to 8415-01-228-1332 depending on size
2	Liner, Cold Weather, Trousers, Field	MIL-L-43498. Quilted polyester batting and ripstop nylon. Previously standard item, button and button holder redesigned for ECWCS use.	8415-01-180-0370 to 8415-01-180-0377 depending on size
3	Liner, Cold Weather, Coat, Men's	MIL-L-43536. Quilted polyester batting and ripstop nylon. Previously standard item, button and button holder redesigned for ECWCS use.	8415-01-062-0679 to 8415-00-782-2890 non-consecutive, eight sizes
3	Trousers, Cold Weather, Field, Nylon and	MIL-T-43497. superseding MIL-T-2060F, a spec originally from the 1950s. Trousers have hip pockets. side front	8415-00-782-2948 to 8415-00-782-2961 in OG 107. non-consecutive.

	Cotton	pocket, leg cargo pockets with tie tapes and pocket flaps having snap fastener closures, ankle hem drawcords. compass pocket, waist adjustment straps, suspender loops, inside button tabs Liner, Cold Weather, Trousers, Field. Previously standard item, used with the M65 jacket, adopted for ECWCS use.	eleven sizes, or 8415-01-099-7853 to 8415-01-099-7862 in Woodland Camouflage (4 color), non-consecutive, eleven sizes.
4	Parka, Extended Cold Weather, Camouflage	MIL-P-44188. 100% Nylon (Microporus polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), Gore-tex). Wind and waterproof, integral hood, two breast inside map pockets (which can be opened without unzipping the parka), two large lower cargo pockets, and a two-way, full-front zipper to provide full face protection. Elastic drawcord at the hem, Velcro closures at the wrist tabs, underarm ventilation, and a rank tab at center chest. New for ECWCS.	8415-01-228-1306 to 8415-01-228-1322, non-consecutive for Woodland camo, and 8415-01-470-2065 to 8415-01-470-2844, non-consecutive for 3-color Desert camo. Also supplied in black or navy.
4	Trousers, Extended Cold Weather, Camouflage	MIL-T-44189. 100% Nylon (Microporus polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), Gore-tex). Wind and waterproof, seat and knee patches, pass-through pockets, and inserts in the seams of the leg openings to allow trousers to be changed without removing boots. New for ECWCS.	8415-01-228-1336 to 8415-01-228-1352, non-consecutive for Woodland camo, and 8415-01-470-1944 to 8415-01-470-3768, non-consecutive for 3-color Desert camo. Also supplied in black or navy.
5	Parka, Snow Camouflage, White	MIL-P-10809. Quarpel treated cotton/nylon oxford cloth, hooded white parka with drawstrings for adjustment at the waist skirt and around the face. Worn with Trousers, Snow Camouflage for full body snow camouflage. Previously standard item adopted for ECWCS use.	8415-00-223-7625 to 8415-00-268-7980 non-consecutive, five sizes
5	Trousers, Snow Camouflage, White	MIL-T-43654. Quarpel treated cotton/nylon oxford cloth, with waist drawoord, side pockets, a hip pocket, knee pleats, and drawstrings at the ankles of the trouser liner. Worn with Parka, Snow Camouflage for full body snow camouflage. Previously standard item adopted for ECWCS use.	8415-00-935-0567 to 8415-00-935-0577 depending on sizes

Generation I Parka, Extended Cold Weather, Camouflage was originally issued in woodland camouflage only with 3-color Desert camouflage added later. The Parka has an inner liner and has buttons on the hood to allow a fur ruff to be attached. The jacket also has a sleeve pocket, two map pockets adjacent to the zipper ("Napoleon pockets") and two cargo pockets at the waist.

There is a snow skirt to prevent snow and wind from entering underneath the jacket. There are "pit zips" for ventilation. The trousers have false pockets that are used as hand warmers. All seams in the parka and trousers are sealed with Gore-Seam, a sealing tape that makes the seams waterproof.

Some Commanders allow the wearing of the "bear shirt" as an outer garment when that is the most comfortable or practical arrangement.

Gen I ECWCS was superseded by Generation II ECWCS, starting in 2006. However, existing stocks of Gen I ECWCS continued in use, overlapping Gen II ECWCS, Gen III ECWCS and the Marine Corps APECS.

Gen I ECWCS Handwear, Headwear, Footwear

Handwear associated with Generation I of the Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (Gen I ECWCS) includes:

- Gloves, Insert, Cold Weather
- Gloves, Men's and Women's, Light Duty
- Mitten Inserts, Cold Weather (Trigger Finger)
- Mitten Shells, Cold Weather (Trigger Finger)
- Mitten Shells, Snow Camouflage, Cotton, White, Two Finger
- Mitten Set, Extreme Cold Weather

Headwear associated with Generation I of the Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (Gen I ECWCS) includes:

- Cap, Camouflage Pattern
- Hood, Combat Vehicle Crewman's (Balaclava, one size)

Footwear associated with Generation I of the Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (Gen I ECWCS) includes:

- Socks, Men's, Nylon, Cushion Sole, Stretch Type, OG-106
- Boots, Cold Weather (Type I-Black) Mickey Mouse boots
- Boots, Extreme Cold Weather (Type II-White) Bunny boots

Gen I ECWCS Accessories

The Parka, ECW, Camouflage has an integrated fabric hood. Another ECWCS component, added after initial fielding, was an attachable fur ruff (Ruff, Parka, Extended Cold Weather), MIL-R-44354. NSN range: 8415-01-315-9765 to 8415-01-315-9769, depending on size. The synthetic fur ruff has a wire rim, Velcro fasteners and snaps for the attachment of the ruff to the parka hood.

The Suspenders, Trousers, M-1950 (MIL-S-10926) are also part of ECWCS, used with the Trousers, Extended Cold Weather, Camouflage.

Information on this page compiled primarily from "Use and Care of the Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (ECWCS)," U.S. Army Natick R, D, & E Center, Natick, MA, January 1986.