



# Precautions with Class B Firefighting Foam (AFFF)



## PFAS HAZARDS

A concern with using Class B AFFF is the potential for PFAS to impact water bodies. PFAS may enter groundwater through direct infiltration into the soil, impacting the water table or surface water through land runoff. PFAS in North Dakota can affect water bodies, including wetlands, lakes, rivers, reservoirs, and aquifers. PFAS could also impact drinking water sources and sensitive or endangered species habitats.

## WHAT IS PFAS?

PFAS are called forever chemicals because their unique chemistry prevents them from breaking down under normal environmental conditions. The Environmental Protection Agency has classified these compounds as emerging contaminants. According to the EPA, there is no safe level of PFAS.

## AFFF IS A SOURCE OF PFAS

Some PFAS contamination is attributed to AFFF use in firefighting emergencies and training exercises. Environmental Quality completed a statewide survey regarding potential PFAS contamination and found it present in shallow groundwater areas associated with the use of Class B AFFF.

Every time PFAS-containing Class B AFFF is released, there are environmental consequences.

- Restrict PFAS-containing AFFF use to fight actual flammable liquid fires when necessary.
- Do not use PFAS-containing AFFF in training exercises. Use alternative fire foams or simulations in any training application.

## DISPOSAL CHALLENGES

There are limited ways to dispose of Class B AFFF. It cannot be flushed down the drain or sent to a landfill. Please refer to the *EPA Interim Guidance on the Destruction and Disposal of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances and Materials Containing Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances* for AFFF disposal instructions. This document is located online at <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/interim-guidancedestroying-and-disposing-certain-pfas-and-pfascontaining-materials-are-not>.

## AFFF ALTERNATIVES

If your fire department or district has PFAS-containing AFFF, consider how and when the right time is to replace it with a less hazardous foam. Assess and understand specific hazards and application objectives.

- Ensure any potential replacement product is listed and approved for use on specific assets and hazards
- Verify the replacement product storage system and the application plan meet federal requirements.

Please contact the North Dakota State Fire Marshal at (701) 328-5550 with any questions about fire management or Environmental Quality at (701) 328-5150 regarding PFAS.