

Information Bulletin

Guidance to Fire Departments Regarding Class B Firefighting Foam Concentrates Which May Contain Hazardous Substances

The New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC), based upon current regulatory requirements promulgated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and related guidance developed by DEC, offers the following recommendations:

1. Discontinue use of any Class B foam concentrate for training purposes due to potential environmental and public health concerns. Class B foams include aqueous film forming foam (AFFF), alcohol resistant aqueous film-forming foam (AR-AFFF), film-forming fluoroprotein foam (FFFP), alcohol resistant film-forming fluoroprotein foam (AR-FFFP), and fluoroprotein foam (FP, FPAR).
 - OFPC recommends use of training foam, Class A wetting agents, or a mild dish detergent verified not to contain materials listed as hazardous substances for the purpose of conducting Class B foam training.
2. Review the fact sheet “Storage and Use of Fire Fighting Foams Under New Hazardous Substance Regulations” provided by DEC regarding changes to 6 NYCRR Part 597 Hazardous Substances Identification, Release Prohibition, and Release Reporting in its entirety.
3. Work with the manufacturer of any foam concentrate currently in inventory to determine if it contains material classified as a hazardous substance or represents other environmental hazards.
4. Based upon that determination, comply as necessary with DEC rules and regulations regarding registration, storage, and any potential use or spill of a hazardous substance, including notification if applied at an actual incident, as well as disposal.
 - Note that use of foam concentrates containing the indicated hazardous substances is permitted for firefighting (not training) until April 25, 2017, to enable users to identify and replace those concentrates while maintaining foam capabilities necessary to provide for public safety in the interim.
5. Properly dispose of foam concentrate containing a hazardous substance, as required by DEC regulation and as indicated in the DEC fact sheet.
 - OFPC recommends properly disposing of any foam concentrate for which the manufacturer, type, or age cannot be determined.
6. Appropriate measures should be taken to confine any Class B foam applied at an incident for vapor suppression or fire control purposes, in addition to those steps taken to confine any hazardous material the foam was applied to (often these measures will be mutually supportive). Finished foam applied to a spill should be cleaned up along with the spill itself by an appropriate party (i.e., approved clean up contractor).

Additional information regarding 6 NYCRR Part 597 Hazardous Substances Identification, Release Prohibition, and Release Reporting is available here:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/104968.html>. Questions regarding that regulation or the “Storage and Use of Fire Fighting Foams Under New Hazardous Substance Regulations” fact sheet should be directed to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Bureau of Technical Support, Division of Environmental Remediation at 518-402-9543 or by email at derweb@dec.ny.gov.