



FDSA

FIRE DEPT SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Bulletin 25.1 **Foam and Fire Apparatus** **August 19, 2025**

Fire departments in the process of ordering new apparatus should evaluate firefighting foam specs. Due to the issues of PFAS water contamination by Aqueous Film Forming Foams (AFFF), departments are now switching to fluorine-free firefighting foam to protect their firefighters and communities.

The demise of AFFF is significantly influencing the fire apparatus market, primarily through regulatory phase-outs, transition challenges to F3s, and associated costs. As PFAS regulations tighten—driven by environmental and health concerns like water contamination and cancer risks—the industry is experiencing shifts in sales dynamics, including potential delays in purchases, increased demand for retrofits, and higher costs for compliant equipment.¹

Regulatory pressure is prompting manufacturers to redesign foam systems in new apparatus for F3 compatibility, which may temporarily slow sales as departments wait for certified models or evaluate options. Industry reports indicate a growing market for firefighting foams overall (projected to reach \$5.67 billion by 2025), but this growth is skewed toward PFAS-free products, potentially cannibalizing sales of older AFFF-equipped apparatus.¹

An east coast metropolitan fire department creatively utilized an 18-month time span to fit into three fiscal years' budgets when they needed to replace their entire aging fire apparatus fleet. At that time, the department changed over to fluorine-free firefighting foam. "Wicked smaht!"

Lawsuits are adding financial strain: Over 10,000 AFFF-related cases are pending as of June 2025, with settlements like 3M's \$10.3 billion in 2023 affecting manufacturers and potentially raising prices.¹ There are serious concerns that the apparatus and foam tanks cannot be completely cleaned of AFFF due to the US Department of Defense's report on previous firefighting foam transitions.²

¹ Grok, accessed 8/19/2025

² Department of Defense, PFAS Task Force, Progress Report, March 2020, p. 3,
https://media.defense.gov/2020/Mar/13/2002264440/-1/-1/1/PFAS_Task_Force_Progress_Report_March_2020.pdf