

A material safety data sheet from 3M in 1999 contained the following instructions in relation to the use of the foam:

- after contact with skin, skin should be immediately washed with soap and large amounts of water**
- contaminated clothing should be washed before re-use and contaminated shoes disposed of**
- if swallowed a physician should be called immediately**
- skin contact should be avoided and gloves should be used when handling this material**
- if exhaust ventilation is not adequate, appropriate respiratory protection should be used**
- avoid breathing airborne material**
- do not eat drink or smoke when using this product**
- wash exposed areas thoroughly with soap and water**
- wash hands after handling and before eating**

Were these instructions passed on to employees of the Department of Defence that came into contact with AFFF?

Defence provides hazardous chemicals related information to personnel in two ways; through work health and safety policy and the delivery of specific job or trade training, supported by safe work procedures.

In 1999, the work health and safety policy for hazardous chemicals was outlined in the *Defence Occupational Health and Safety Manual*. This manual included advice that adequate information, instruction, supervision and training is to be provided to employees, visitors and contractors. This includes the provision of, and access to, the hazardous substances register and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

Defence provided instructions specific to safe trade-work for Defence firefighting personnel. These safety instructions included the following advice:

***Give Cleaners/Chemicals Special Care.** Keep cleaners/chemicals in approved safety containers and in minimum quantities. Some cleaners/chemicals may have an adverse effect on skin, eyes and respiratory tract. Observe manufacturer's WARNING labels and current safety directives. Use cleaners/chemicals only in authorised areas. Discard soiled cloths into safety cans. Consult Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for specific precautions, protective equipment, and ventilation requirements.*

This advice was applicable to personnel who would have had the potential to handle, or be exposed to the foam. It should be noted that in 1999, Defence was also required to comply with *Commonwealth Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (1994)* which required MSDS on the hazardous substance to be available to each employee who could be exposed (Regulation 6.12 (2)). In Defence, this was achieved through either hard-copy MSDS available in folders accessible by all employees, or through use of Defence intranet unit-sponsored websites.