

**Questions:**

1. Is Ansulite firefighting foam used at Pearce air base? If yes why is it used? If no why isn't it used?
2. If Ansulite firefighting foam is used at Pearce is it used for training purposes or only in emergency situations?
3. If Ansulite is used at Pearce air base does it contain trace amounts of PFAS chemicals (which include a subgroup of chemicals called PFOS and PFOA)?
4. Is Solberg RF6 used at Pearce air base? If yes why is it used? If no why isn't it used?
5. The ABC has reported that some research commissioned by Defence in 2012 found Solberg RF6 was more toxic than Ansulite. Can you confirm if Defence commissioned this research and if the research concluded Solberg RF6 was more toxic than Ansulite?
6. If neither of these chemicals are used at Pearce air base, which product is used and is it used for both training and emergency situations?

**Response:**

From 2004, the Department of Defence commenced phasing out its use of legacy aqueous film forming foams (AFFF) containing perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) as active ingredients, and progressively transitioned to a less environmentally persistent product called Ansulite for use on the Defence estate, including RAAF Base Pearce.

The product currently used by Defence does not contain PFOS and PFOA as active ingredients and only contains trace elements of the chemicals. Ansulite is used by the Department of Defence in emergency situations where human life is at risk, or in controlled environments to test equipment. Any Ansulite used for testing is captured and treated and/or disposed of at licensed waste disposal facilities. Defence uses a training foam which does not contain PFOS and PFOA. The foam is captured and disposed of in accordance with current regulations.

Defence does not use Solberg RF6 on the Defence Estate. Defence has commissioned various comparative studies to understand the toxicity of different AFFF products. One such study conducted by the Cooperative Research Centre for Contamination Assessment and Remediation of the Environment (CRC CARE) to compare the toxicity, persistence and bioaccumulation of Ansulite and Solberg RF6. The study found that in laboratory conditions Ansulite was less toxic than Solberg to all test organisms used in the study. In general, it was found that Solberg was at least 10 times more toxic than Ansulite.

Response provided to journalist  
16 May 2017

Defence is working continuously towards the effective monitoring and management of PFAS contamination on, and in the vicinity of, some of its bases. In addition, Defence continues to engage with industry experts both nationally and internationally to identify the best management and remedial options for PFAS throughout Australia, including the use of various AFFF.

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