

Questions:

- Which Govt agency is responsible for monitoring firefighting foam storage and products used?
- As part of DoD's PFOS/PFAS investigation is there a plan/proposal to ban those foams that contain the toxic chemicals?
- Is there some notion of the scale for such a recall or ban?

Response:

Questions regarding the monitoring of the use of aqueous film forming foams (AFFF) should be directed to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy or relevant state and territory government agencies where use has occurred within their boundaries.

Questions regarding the recent AFFF spill at Brisbane Airport should be directed to the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development or the relevant Queensland Government agency. Defence has no involvement in the management of this event given it occurred at a civilian airport.

From 2004, the Department of Defence commenced phasing out its use of legacy 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. 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 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.