

## **AFFF Extinguishers Discontinued**

### **Why are AFFF (Foam) Extinguishers being discontinued?**

You may have heard of 'forever chemicals'? They are chemicals that are difficult to break down in the environment and in the body. Standard AFFF (Aqueous Film Forming Foam) extinguishers have something called PFAS (Per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances) in their chemical makeup and that is classed as a 'forever chemical' and 'the powers that be' have deemed that this is not allowed to continue and are in the process of deciding how to go about removing these from use in the UK. (The change is Worldwide.) The UK are a bit behind the curve compared to the rest of the World but it's coming. Whilst the committee making the decision isn't due to come out with anything until at least 2025, that hasn't stopped manufacturers for making the change now, rather than wait. Our suppliers have recently informed us that standard foam fire extinguishers are being discontinued and replaced with Fluorine Free Foam fire extinguishers.

### **So, what does that mean to me, the customer?**

The new Fluorine Free Foam Extinguishers still work in the same way as a standard AFFF extinguisher but the Fluorine Free Foam extinguisher relies on a thicker blanket of foam rather than a thin 'foamy' film.

The bad news is the new Fluorine Free Foam extinguishers are £15 more expensive for us to buy and that cost will need to be added to the resale price; we're not adding anything else to that. So, whatever you used to pay for a foam extinguisher is now increased by £15. Any new foam extinguisher supplied will be the new Fluorine Free Foam Extinguisher.

### **What about the 5 yearly extended service/refill?**

We are one of the few remaining companies that will/can carry out the 5 yearly extended service, which includes a discharge test, internal inspection of the protective plastic lining and a refill if the extinguisher is suitable for further use. Where a standard AFFF extinguisher is due its extended service we can still refill it with the standard foam concentrate. Although, the foam concentrate is also being discontinued we have procured a good supply of it to last to the end of 2025 at current usage rates, but when that is gone any AFFF extinguishers due their 5 yearly extended service will need to be replaced with an alternative extinguisher, whether that is a Fluorine Free Foam Extinguisher or a water spray extinguisher (if that meets the required fire risks for which it was installed for).

You may, if you wish, request that any AFFF extinguishers that are due their 5 yearly extended service in 2026 or 2027 are brought forward to 2024/25 so that you guarantee we have the foam concentrate to refill them to keep them in service for as long as possible.

### **Can't you refill my standard AFFF extinguisher with Fluorine Free Foam concentrate?**

Unfortunately not. We looked into this and it's not possible. To explain, the part of the AFFF concentrate that they want rid of is its film forming capability. An AFFF extinguisher would put a very thin film onto the surface of a burning liquid in order to prevent flammable vapours from being given off, but this capability has now been removed. What is required is a much thicker blanket of foam that prevents vapours from being given off. To do this, the new Fluorine Free Foam extinguisher requires a totally different type of spray nozzle and they are not interchangeable with the older extinguishers. So, simply putting Fluorine Free Foam concentrate in an AFFF extinguisher won't work.