

AFFF Collection and Disposal Program Alternatives

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology at 360-407-6700 or hwtrpubs@ecy.wa.gov, or visit ecology.wa.gov/accessibility. For Relay Service or TTY, call 711 or 877-833-6341.

Publication: 23-04-013
December 2023



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) is a firefighting foam used to extinguish liquid-based fires—such as fires fueled by gasoline, oil, or chemicals. AFFF contains per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which improve the foam’s heat resistance and ability to spread quickly over fire to suppress it. However, PFAS are toxic chemicals that can contaminate soil, surface water, groundwater, and drinking water if firefighting foam isn’t properly stored or cleaned up after use.

As directed by the Washington State Legislature, the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is developing a foam collection program to assist municipal fire departments with the proper disposal of unused PFAS-containing foam. As part of the collection program, Ecology prepared a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to determine a feasible and safer way to dispose of AFFF.

As part of the DEIS process, Ecology evaluated five options for the AFFF Collection and Disposal Program.

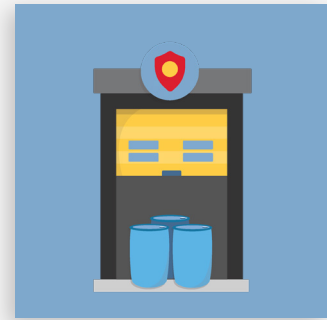


Firefighters using AFFF to put out a vehicle fire.

DEIS Alternatives

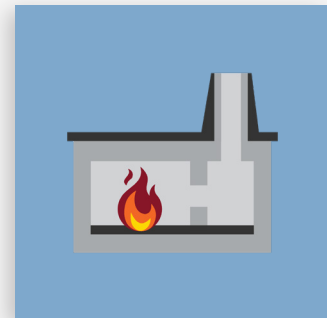
Alternative 1: Approved Hold in Place

Under this alternative, AFFF stays at participating municipal fire departments in safer, Ecology-approved containers until new treatment and disposal technology is developed and available.



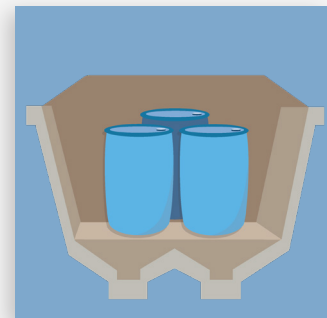
Alternative 2: Incineration

Under this alternative, AFFF is collected and transported to a federally permitted incinerator, which is a waste treatment facility where the foam is burned. After incineration, residual ash is buried at a permitted landfill.



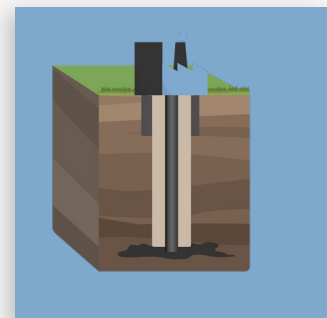
Alternative 3: Solidification and Landfilling

Under this alternative, AFFF is collected and transported to a state or federally permitted landfill for disposal. At the landfill, AFFF is solidified in a neutral material such as concrete. The AFFF-containing material is buried in containers within the landfill to prevent release.



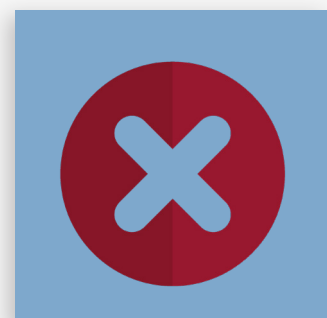
Alternative 4: Class 1 Deep-Well Injection

Under this alternative, AFFF is collected and transported to a state or federally permitted deep well injection facility and pumped thousands of feet into the earth—far below the lowermost underground sources of drinking water—to prevent groundwater contamination.



Alternative 5: No Action

Under this alternative, Ecology wouldn't implement an AFFF disposal program. Individual municipal fire departments would continue manage storage and disposal of their AFFF supply.



Next Steps

- [Explore the DEIS](#)¹ through our interactive document to learn more about the alternatives and environmental impacts we evaluated.
- [Provide written feedback](#)² during the public comment period, which is open from Dec. 20, 2023, to Feb. 5, 2024.
- Learn more by attending our [information session](#).³
- Provide verbal feedback during our [public hearing](#).⁴
- Provide written feedback by emailing AFFFDisposal@ecy.wa.gov.

Sean Smith

Washington State Department of Ecology
Hazardous Waste and Toxic Reduction
425-324-0328 | sean.smith@ecy.wa.gov

Additional information

- [Ecology's PFAS in Firefighting Foam fact sheet](#)⁵
- [Toxics in Firefighting Agents and Equipment Law](#)⁶
- [Ecology's AFFF Collection & Disposal Program webpage](#)⁷
- [Ecology's PFAS webpage](#)⁸

1 ecology.wa.gov/AFFF-DEIS

2 ecology.wa.gov/AFFF-comment

3 us02web.zoom.us/j/89520569255

4 us02web.zoom.us/j/88449630921

5 <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2204037.pdf>

6 <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70A.400>

7 <https://ecology.wa.gov/AFFF-disposal>

8 <https://ecology.wa.gov/PFAS>