



Class A Foam Fact Sheet



What is a Class A Foam? A product that relies primarily on the water it contains for firefighting. These products contain foaming agents which create air bubbles when aerated and wetting agents which allow the fluid that drains from foam bubbles to be easily absorbed by fuel, soil, and other materials that it come into contact with.

Class A foams are one-component, wet concentrates that are mixed with water to improve the firefighting characteristics of water.

Go to https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/fire/documents/qpl_foam.pdf for a list of qualified Class A Foam products.

Water quality: Some products may be affected by water temperature or water quality, i.e. hardness/softness, pH. This may impact their foaming ability and longevity of the foam in particular.

Mixing outside of QPL listed mix ratios (either higher or lower): Mixing at higher mix ratios will not generally improve performance and MAY slow drain time while mixing at lower mix ratios may result in ineffective performance, such as lack of wetting. There is an increased potential for corrosion outside the approved mix ratio range.

Application:

- Best in direct suppression efforts
- Products are NOT effective when dry (water has evaporated)
- Evaporation RATES are very similar to water; however, judging effectiveness by the presence of the foam bubbles may be misleading. The presence of bubbles suggests that the water remains entrapped in the bubble structure which may aid in keeping water on an inclined or vertical surface.
- Assume a fairly short period of time, up to about 15 to 30 minutes of effectiveness in normal wildland conditions.
- Class A Foams are approved for application from ground equipment and helicopter buckets. Some products also are approved for application from single-engine airtankers (SEATs) and/or fixed-tank helicopters. Some agencies may also apply foams from water-scooping aircraft.

Other considerations: Be aware of the potential degreasing action of Class A foams to aircraft and other equipment.

A heavy ground covering of foam may conceal hazards and increase the potential for tripping.

Class A foams may not be compatible with retardant salts, resulting in absence or poor quality and stability of bubbles.

Aircraft tanks and other equipment should be thoroughly rinsed before changing from one product to another.

For more information on Class A foams or program contacts, please visit our website:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/fire/wfcs>

As long as the product is qualified and on the Qualified Products List (QPL), Class A Foams can be used on any federal wildfire. If the QPL product is working and fire and forest personnel are satisfied with its effectiveness, nothing prevents a forest from using it in the manner and mix ratio described on the QPL. The decision regarding the type of chemical used is determined by the Incident Commander and/or Agency Administrator

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