Kord Fire Protection Explains Why Facilities Are Reviewing Old AFFF Fire Suppression Systems for PFAS Exposure

As PFAS concerns reshape the fire protection industry...

STUDIO CITY, CA, UNITED STATES, June 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Kord Fire Protection is sharing guidance for facility owners, property managers, and industrial operators as more businesses review older AFFF fire suppression systems for potential PFAS exposure, environmental liability, and long-term replacement planning.

AFFF, or aqueous film-forming foam, has been widely used for decades in Class B fire suppression applications involving flammable liquids, fuel hazards, aircraft operations, industrial sites, and high-risk storage environments. While AFFF became a common solution because of its ability to suppress flammable liquid fires, many legacy foam concentrates contain PFAS, a group of persistent chemicals now facing growing health, environmental, regulatory, and legal scrutiny.

Across the fire protection industry, the conversation around AFFF has changed. Facilities are no longer only asking whether a foam system will activate during an emergency. They are also asking what type of foam is stored on site, whether that foam contains PFAS, how a discharge would be contained, how system testing is performed, and what steps may be needed to transition toward fluorine-free foam alternatives.

PFAS concerns have already led to significant legal and regulatory action. In California, SB 1044 restricted the manufacture, sale, distribution, and use of PFAS-containing Class B firefighting foam, with certain industry-specific exceptions and delayed timelines for some fuel-related facilities. Nationally, airports and aviation fire protection programs have also been preparing for the transition to fluorine-free firefighting foam, with the FAA publishing a transition plan for aircraft firefighting foam after congressional direction.

The legal landscape is also becoming more visible. PFAS contamination tied to firefighting foam has been the subject of major lawsuits, including recent public cases involving foam manufacturers and alleged contamination near training or defense sites. Recent reporting has covered a Wisconsin settlement involving Tyco Fire Products and PFAS contamination allegations, as well as Australia's large lawsuit against 3M over firefighting foam-related PFAS contamination at defense bases.

For facility owners, these developments create a practical risk management issue. An older AFFF fire suppression system may still be present in a warehouse, aircraft hangar, fuel facility, manufacturing plant, utility site, laboratory, or industrial building. In many cases, the first step is not immediate replacement. The first step is documentation.

A professional review should identify the foam concentrate currently in use, whether the product contains PFAS, the system's age and condition, the protected hazard, the manufacturer data, the testing history, containment conditions, drainage pathways, and any prior discharge or accidental release concerns. Facilities should also evaluate whether the system is connected to other building infrastructure, including fire alarms, power supplies, pumps, controls, emergency shutoffs, detection equipment, and mechanical or electrical systems.

This is where coordination between fire protection and electrical infrastructure becomes especially important. Foam fire suppression systems often depend on detection circuits, releasing panels, emergency power, control wiring, alarms, shutdown relays, and monitoring pathways. For facilities planning major upgrades, anchor topics such as commercial electrical systems, industrial electrical services, emergency power systems, and electrical infrastructure upgrades are highly relevant to Kord Electric, especially when foam system modernization affects control equipment, backup power, or facility-wide life safety coordination.

The transition from AFFF to fluorine-free foam, often called F3, should not be treated as a simple chemical swap. Fluorine-free foam may require engineering review, revised design assumptions, compatibility checks, updated discharge devices, recalculated application rates, storage changes, and new testing procedures. NFPA's Fire Protection Research Foundation has also published roadmap work addressing the transition from legacy fluorinated foams to fluorine-free alternatives.

Kord Fire Protection advises facility teams to approach AFFF review as a documentation, compliance, and operational readiness issue. Before draining, flushing, replacing, or testing a legacy foam system, facility owners should understand the type of foam in the system, whether specialized disposal may be required, and whether local, state, or federal requirements apply.

"AFFF was a major part of Class B fire protection for decades, but PFAS concerns have changed how facilities need to evaluate these systems," said a Kord Fire Protection representative. "The priority now is understanding what is already on site, how the system is connected to the building, what risks exist during testing or discharge, and what a responsible transition plan may look like."

For facilities in Los Angeles and across Southern California, AFFF review may be especially important for industrial buildings, aviation-related properties, fleet yards, fuel storage sites, manufacturing facilities, utility sites, and properties with older special hazard suppression systems.

Kord Fire Protection continues to support facility owners with fire suppression system evaluation, inspection planning, documentation review, and transition guidance for foam-based fire protection systems. As PFAS concerns continue to reshape the industry, facilities with older AFFF fire suppression systems should review their systems proactively and coordinate with qualified fire protection professionals before making changes.

Darius Kordabadi
Kord Fire Protection
+1 800-918-8978
email us here
