



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Service Position Statement: Using Foam at Operational Incidents



The use of foam for putting out fires has been available to fire services for several decades. However, at Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) we made the decision in 2022 to only use fluorine free foam instead of its more harmful alternative, fluorinated foam, which is being phased out in the UK due to its persistent pollution properties.

At HWFRS we rarely use foam for incidents, but when we do, we are in contact with partner agencies, such as the Environment Agency and Water Companies to make sure we minimise the impact to the environment and avoid unmanaged run off into nearby waterways and drains.

When we needed to use foam at incidents, such as at the carpet factory fire in Kidderminster in December 2021, we used specialist equipment from our Environmental Protection Unit to minimise the water run-off from the site. This equipment is approved and supplied by the Environment Agency and includes items such as poly booms and drain blockers that prevent the foam from running off into areas it shouldn't, such as waterways. At this incident, the decision to use foam as a rapid protective media, was made due to concerns over the heat release rate of the fire onto adjacent buildings.



The foam we now use has been specifically sourced, as it is one of the least environmentally damaging products on the market. The decision to use it will be balanced against the risk to life and property. Its use will always be in consultation with relevant partner agencies such as the Environment Agency.

Statement dated: March 2023