



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

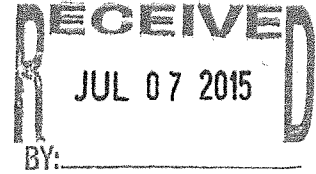


PAUL R. LEPAGE
GOVERNOR

PATRICIA W. AHO
COMMISSIONER

June 25, 2015

Chief Kenneth A. Brillant
Maine Fire Chiefs' Association
60 Community Drive
Augusta, ME 04330



RE: Firefighting foam discharges to waters of the State.

Dear Chief Brillant:

Earlier this year a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) staff person observed foam being discharged into a river in central Maine. Upon further investigation, he found that firefighters from the local fire department were testing firefighting foam and equipment and spraying the foam into the river. The firefighters were under the mistaken impression that because the foam was reportedly "biodegradable" discharging it to the river was allowable. As soon as they understood that the discharge was a violation of State and Federal Law, they stopped immediately. The foaming agent being used for the testing, Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF), although generally non-toxic, can have significant negative impacts on aquatic life and water quality. In this instance, the DEP concluded that the estimated volume of pollutants discharged did not warrant enforcement action from the DEP.

However, the DEP would like to take this opportunity to remind fire departments that discharge of AFFF, or any foaming agent, into the waters of the State in non-emergency situations is a violation of 38 M. R. S. A §413(1). It is our understanding that testing and training normally take place in upland areas where the foam (AFFF, Class A, or training) will not drain directly or indirectly to any stream, wetland, or other waterbody. Ideally, this training should take place in areas where aquatic and terrestrial life will not be impacted and the residual foam and waters will drain directly to a treatment facility. We understand the need to test equipment and train personnel on a regular basis and truly appreciate the work the firefighting community does. We ask that the Maine Fire Chief's Association remind your members to use best practices during equipment firefighting foam testing and training. Any assistance you can provide by disseminating this letter to your members via your newsletter, web page or list serve is appreciated.

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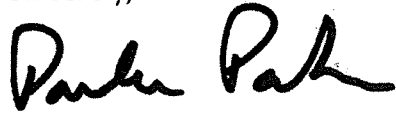
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If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to call me at 207-485-3038 or e-mail me at pamela.d.parker@maine.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pamela Parker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pamela Parker
Water Enforcement Unit Manager
Division of Water Quality Management