

Beware Foam Clones!

“It is very important to realise that within any category of foam the specific properties and performance of individual products can vary enormously” (LASTFIRE Report, 1997).

Or in other words, buying a FluorProtein (FP) foam is like buying a car. Just as you can buy anything from a Mini to a Mercedes, so there is a wide choice of FP brands to suit every pocket.

This breadth of choice exists because foam manufacturers fall into two groups - innovators and imitators. Angus Fire is an innovator. This means it develops technologically advanced foams like FP70 Plus and manufactures them in a way that ensures optimal fire fighting performance.

In stark contrast, imitators take leading brands like FP70 Plus and make cheap down-market copies or “clones”. Typical cost-cutting ploys include:

- Slashing the levels of key ingredients such as protein and fluorosurfactant.
- Failing to obtain independent third party verification of performance.
- Providing little if any environmental impact data.
- Offering little in the way of after-sales back-up such as regular foam testing and emergency delivery services.

But while cheap cars can usually be relied on to perform their basic function of transportation, foam clones are invariably not up to the job of putting out fires:

- Deterioration in storage may render them useless when they are needed in an emergency.
- Poor fire fighting performance may necessitate two or even three times the amount of foam to extinguish and secure a blaze – if it can to it at all!
- The extra manpower and equipment required to apply all that extra foam may not be readily available.
- The prolonged fire fighting operation may cause additional loss of life, damage to property, consequential losses, unwelcome media coverage, and environmental pollution.

While foam clones may look like bargains to cash-strapped fire brigades, they are in fact a false economy. While their manufacturers purport them to be the equivalent of the real thing, quality has in fact been ruthlessly sacrificed in the pursuit of low prices. FP70 Plus is not the cheapest FP on the market, but its extra cost is dwarfed by the cost of disaster that may be incurred by relying on a foam clone.

Gasoline drop test



Gasoline (dyed red) dropped on to a premix solution of FP70 Plus does not spread over the surface. But when dropped on to a premix solution of a foam clone it spreads rapidly to cover the whole surface. This means that the foam clone is readily contaminated by gasoline, which in turn means that much greater quantities of it will be required to extinguish and secure a storage tank fire. This foam clone contains only one-third the level of fluorosurfactant present in FP70 Plus. While it is classified as a FluoroProtein because it contains fluorosurfactant and protein, its fire fighting performance is in fact little better than a standard Protein foam.

Ref: 6166 02/03

The right is reserved to vary or modify any specification without prior notice.

© Angus Fire



THAME PARK ROAD, THAME, OXFORDSHIRE, OX9 3RT, ENGLAND
Tel: +44 (0) 1844 265000 Fax: +44(0) 1844 265156
e-mail: general.enquiries@kiddeuk.co.uk
website address: www.angusfire.co.uk

