

Fire College Employees Sue AFFF Manufacturers For \$35 Million

Posted by: [Curt Varone](#) December 25, 2018 [0 Comments](#)

Six former employees of the Florida State Fire College in Ocala who developed thyroid diseases and/or various cancers have filed a class action lawsuit against ten parties they claim were responsible for exposing them to toxic chemicals contained in aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF). David Battisti, Regina Saueracker, Mary Ann Benson, Susan Schell, Carol Smith, and Anita Pringle filed the action last week in U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

The suit claims the defendants were responsible for bringing AFFF to the college, and that two toxic components of the foam, perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), caused their illnesses. The ten defendants are:

1. 3M Company,
2. Tyco Fire Products, L.P.
3. Buckeye Fire Equipment Company
4. Chemguard, Inc.
5. National Foam, Inc.
6. Kidde Fire Fighting, Inc.
7. Williams Holdings, Inc.
8. John F. Hannon was the CEO and Secretary of Williams Holdings, Inc.
9. Kidde-Fenwal, Inc.
10. UTC Fire & Security Americas Corporation, Inc.

As explained in the complaint:

- *PFOS and PFOA are highly toxic and carcinogenic chemicals. The Defendants knew or should have known that PFOS and PFOA are persistent when released into the environment and present significant risks to human health and the environment.*
- *Nevertheless, the Defendants knowingly and willfully manufactured, designed, marketed, sold, and distributed AFFF products containing PFOS and/or PFOA when they knew or reasonably should have known that these harmful compounds would be released into the air, soil, and groundwater during firefighting training exercises and in firefighting emergencies, and would threaten the health and welfare of firefighters and other individuals exposed to these dangerous and hazardous chemicals.*
- *Defendants' PFOS- and/or PFOA- containing AFFF products were used by Plaintiffs, and others at the Fire College, in their intended manner, without significant change in the products' condition. Being unaware of the dangerous properties of the Defendants' AFFF products, Plaintiffs relied on Defendants' instructions as to proper methods of handling the products. Plaintiffs' consumption, inhalation or dermal absorption of PFOS and/or PFOA from Defendants' AFFF products caused Plaintiffs to develop numerous serious medical conditions, including, but not limited to, thyroid disease, kidney cancer and/or end-stage kidney disease, ulcerative colitis, and hypercholesterolemia.*
- *[The plaintiffs were] exposed to significantly elevated levels of PFOS and PFOA in their concentrated form as a result of regular contact with the Defendants' AFFF products and through PFOS and PFOA having contaminated the wells at the Fire College, including, but not limited to, through the accumulation of PFOS and PFOA in the pipes, faucets, showerheads, appliances, sinks, and drinking water fountains.*
- *Plaintiff David Battisti has suffered from thyroid disease as a direct and proximate result of his exposure to PFOA and PFOS and is at an increased risk of developing several health effects,*

including but not limited to effects on the liver and immune system, kidney cancer, testicular cancer, high cholesterol, colitis, and autoimmune diseases.

- *Plaintiff Regina Saueracker has suffered from thyroid disease, kidney disease, including bilateral renal masses, and ulcerative colitis as a direct result of her exposure to PFOS and PFOA. She is at an increased risk of developing several health effects, including but not limited to effects on the liver and immune system, kidney cancer, breast cancer, high cholesterol, and autoimmune diseases.*
- *Plaintiff Mary Ann Benson has suffered from thyroid disease and breast cancer as a direct result of her exposure to PFOS and PFOA and is at an increased risk of developing several health effects, including but not limited to effects on the liver and immune system, kidney cancer, testicular cancer, high cholesterol, colitis, and autoimmune diseases.*
- *Plaintiff Susan Schell has suffered from end-stage kidney disease as a direct result of her exposure to PFOS and PFOA and is at an increased risk of developing several health effects, including but not limited to effects on the liver and immune system, kidney cancer, breast cancer, high cholesterol, colitis, and autoimmune diseases.*
- *Plaintiff Carol Smith has suffered from thyroid disease as a direct result of her exposure to PFOS and PFOA and is at an increased risk of developing several health effects, including but not limited to effects on the liver and immune system, kidney cancer, testicular cancer, high cholesterol, colitis, and autoimmune diseases.*
- *Plaintiff Anita Pringle has suffered from thyroid disease and parathyroid cancer as a direct result of her exposure to PFOA and PFOS and is at an increased risk of developing several health effects, including but not limited to effects on the liver and immune system, kidney cancer, breast cancer, high cholesterol, colitis, and autoimmune diseases.*

The suit alleges negligence, gross negligence, and strict liability, and seeking over \$35 Million in damages, including over \$5 million for medical monitoring and over \$5 million in punitive damages. The spouses of Carol Smith and Anita Pringle joined in the suit seeking damages for a loss of consortium.

The suit seeks the creation of a class of plaintiffs consisting of "firefighter instructors, trainees, staff members, and other individuals who worked and/or trained at the Florida State Fire College located at 11655 NW Gainesville Road, Ocala, Florida 34482."

Here is a copy of the complaint: [Battisti v 3M Company](#)