Quick Fix

POK's foam with Quick Stik Technology is a cost-effective alternative to eductors & pails

By Greg Jakubowski

Many firefighters want to add foam to their tool arsenal. However, doing so can be very confusing and expensive. Do we add a fixed proportioner, a fixed foam tank or compressed air? And how do we pay for it and flush it properly when we are done using it?

POK of North America has tried to simplify things a bit with its Quick Stik Technology. The POK foam technology is based upon a "solid" foam stick that is placed in an inline mixing tube that can be located at the pump panel, anywhere in the hoseline or built into the nozzle. As water passes through the mixing tube, the stick dissolves, adding foam to the water. There is no need to carry around separate eductors or pails of foam.

The POK equipment is machined out of high-grade aluminum alloy impregnated with a trademark finish containing Teflon, to provide for long life. The system is easy to use and train on, and the foam sticks use an Underwriters Laboratories (UL)-listed foaming agent manufactured by Buckeye, a reputable foam manufacturer. Foam sticks are available in Class A, or Class A & B suppressing agents. There's also an industrial cleaner/degreaser stick for dirty jobs around the station. You can purchase just the proportioner, a break-apart nozzle with mixing tube or the nozzle itself. Nozzles are designed to work with ¾", 1", 1 ½", 1 ¾" or 2 ½" hose.

While helping out the West Hancock Fire and Rescue Department in Mississippi, I got a chance to utilize the foam mini nozzle on a woodland fire. We found that when using POK's system, the foam sticks must be readily available to the nozzleman. It took a moment or two to put the stick in the mixing tube prior to use, but once it was in place it made good foam that worked effectively in knocking down the woods fire with minimal overhaul needed. *Note:* Unless you have an onboard foam system, using foam requires placing foam pails and an eductor on a handline—which involves at least as much setup time as the POK system.

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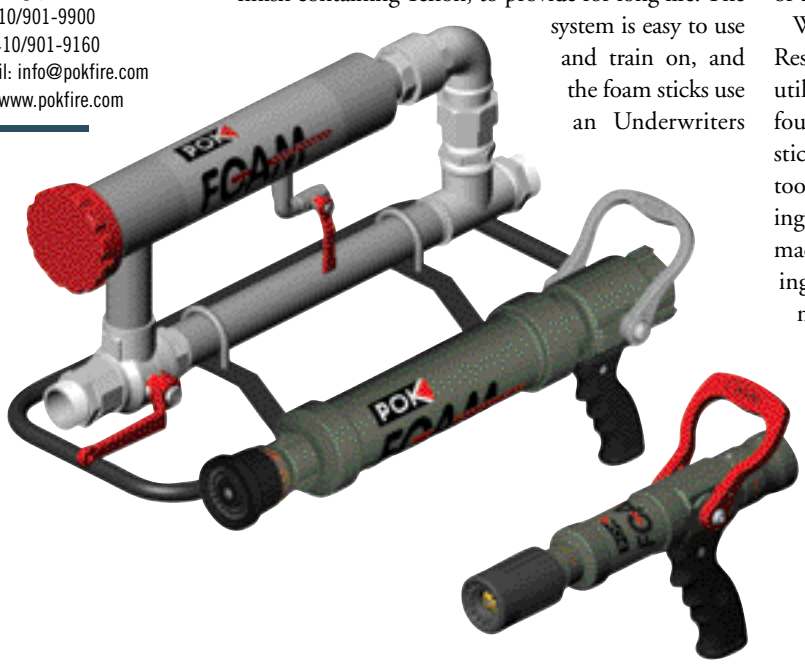
Low-expansion foam nozzle attachments are available with the POK system. I would recommend using them to ensure proper foam expansion when making a blanket for a Class B hazard.



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POK's Foam with Quick Stik Technology

Pros

+ Easy to use and clean/flush;
+ Less expensive and easier than installing a fixed system in your apparatus;
+ Nozzle can be used with and without foam; and
+ Saves space—no need to carry around buckets of foam.

Cons

- Not easy to tell when you are "out" of foam, except that foam stops coming out of the nozzle; and
- The foam sticks are supposed to be stored in a bag/canister to avoid drying out and must be inserted into the eductor/proportioner when you want to use them.

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The mixing tube can be located at the pump panel, anywhere in the hoseline or built into the nozzle.

We didn't get a chance to try the foam out on a flammable liquids fire, but low-expansion foam nozzle attachments are available, and I would recommend using them to ensure proper foam expansion when making a blanket for a Class B hazard.

If the idea of putting the foam stick into the mixing tube en route or on arrival doesn't bother you, and you don't want to spend a lot of money to put a system together, the POK system is a neat little addition to your firefighting toolkit. After he saw it in action, the West Hancock chief bought the demo nozzle we had.

Greg Jakubowski is a fire protection engineer and certified safety professional with 28 years of fire-service experience. He is a Pennsylvania State Fire Instructor and serves as assistant chief with the Lingohocken Fire Company in Bucks County, Pa. Greg is also a principal in Fire Planning Associates, a company dedicated to helping fire departments, municipalities and businesses with pre-emergency planning.