

NEW SOUTH WALES FIRE BRIGADES

SAFETY BULLETIN 2006/01



Fire Blocking Gels

A substance known as fire blocking gel is being marketed throughout Australia. It is designed to protect homes at risk from bushfires. This type of product is available direct to the public.

There are a number of manufacturers of fire gel products. Brand names include Thermo Gel, Barricade, and Firesorb. The substance is a super absorbent polymer-based product that, when mixed with water, forms a gel-like substance. The substance is then sprayed onto structures or vegetation to provide a protective coating to insulate the object from radiant heat or direct flame contact from bushfires.

Risks to Firefighters

Firefighters may encounter fire blocking gel when attending bushfire incidents. The gels are extremely slippery. Consequently caution is required by fire fighters when working in or around areas where this product has been applied, particularly when working on roofs, ladders and uneven ground.

The material safety data sheets (MSDS) for the gel recommends the following

- handle the product in an area that is well ventilated
- wear rubber gloves when coming into direct contact with the concentrate
- avoid contact with the skin and eyes as the product may irritate these areas.
- in the event of contact, eyes should be flushed thoroughly with water and the skin washed with soap and water.

Reference Barricade MSDS

<http://www.barricadegel.com/technical.asp#MSDS>

Environmental Impact

The gels are biodegradable over time, particularly in sunlight. Firefighters are to be aware they may encounter these products in bushfire situations and that caution should be used when applying water directly onto surfaces that have been treated with fire blocking gel.

The impact of run off from this substance should be considered as the product may have an effect on aquatic species on entering streams, lakes or other water bodies.

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NSWFB Considerations

The NSWFB does not endorse the use of any type of fire blocking gel products

NSWFB personnel including Community Fire Unit volunteers should not be used to apply or remove the product to/from structures or vegetation. NSWFB equipment should not be used for this purpose.

Station Commanders responsible for Community Fire Units are required to notify respective units of this Safety Bulletin.

Noted, Station Commander	A	B	C	D	Other

Contact Officer:	File Number:	Date:
Name Chris Wilson Operational Safety Coordinator PH (02) 9318-4877	CHO/06178	12th January 2006

Previous Safety Bulletin: 2005/09 Stihl TS350 Power Saw