

It Looks Good, But Is It Authorized?

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What do you do when you find OBAs with flash hoods that are the wrong color? The same thing you do with AFFF fire extinguishers that have unacceptable foot stands—don't use them!

During a recent survey, I visited a submarine that had purchased dark-gray flash hoods for their OBAs from a local civilian vendor. Why buy these hoods? Because they are cheap. In this case, though, I learned they wouldn't protect someone fighting a fire in an enclosed space. They weren't designed to provide such protection.

The only flash hoods authorized¹ for use in submarines are listed in the appropriate APLs.

Aboard another submarine I visited, all the AFFF fire extinguishers had been outfitted with new foot stands. I was amazed at the response I got from a DCPO when I asked him how he had managed to replace them. "I just broke off the mushroom-shaped piece of metal [technically called the bayonet] on the bottom of the extinguishers and glued the new foot stands in place."



The problem with this "fix" is that ComNavSeaSysCom, NavSurfWarCen ShipSys-EngSta, and Amerex (the manufacturer) disapprove of it. Amerex went so far as to say that removing the bayonet affects the structural integrity of the extinguisher shells. The extinguishers all needed to be hydrostatically tested or replaced.

Before you stray from approved equipment or procedures, it pays to bounce your ideas off the authorities. Furthermore, with today's push for commercial-off-the-shelf procurement, you have to do your homework. Otherwise, you may end up with something that isn't suited for its intended purpose. The two ships here thought they were saving money, but, in the long run, it cost them more to correct the situation. ☹

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For More Info...

¹Use NSN 9D 8415-01-462-7670 to order authorized flash hoods for OBAs and FFEs. Use NSN 9D 8415-01-268-3473 to order flash hoods for EABs.

