

SAFETY MEMO

October 31th, 2022 – Fire Extinguishers - Part 1



Did you know?

Regulations

For all buildings where a portable fire extinguisher is required, applicable building codes, by-laws and standards will guide you in making a choice of suitable fire extinguisher.

It is necessary to determine the type of fires to which the building could be exposed to select an appropriate class of fire extinguisher. In addition, one must consider the area and layout of the building to have enough fire extinguishers.



Picture 1: Courtesy of iStock

Type and Installation

- Use an appropriately sized fire extinguisher
- Install according to current fire protection requirements in your jurisdiction
- Install in a visible and accessible place
- Install the wall bracket / support provided for this purpose 4 to 5 feet from the ground
- Install signs indicating the locations of fire extinguishers
- Label the fire extinguisher according to the class of fire
- Place in such a way that operating instructions are visible
- Ensure that the fire extinguisher is full and in working order

- Install away from electrical appliances and potential sources of fire
- Ensure that the label indicating the date of the last inspection or maintenance present is on the device
- Has a certification seal from a recognized organization such as Underwriters' Laboratories (UL in US, cUL or ULc in Canada, ULeu in Europe)

Maintenance

Maintaining fire extinguishers is essential, so that the extinguisher is in good working order when it is needed.

Refer to the user manual provided by the manufacturer for complete maintenance steps.

Every Month

- Visually check the fire extinguisher (pressure/level indicator, check for damage, rust and signs of degradation)
- Flip and shake (upside down) to unpack the suspended powder
- Perform maintenance according to the manufacturer's recommendations or by properly trained people.
- Keep a maintenance record for all fire extinguishers in your building

After Use

- Even if the fire is extinguished – call local emergency response! 911 in US and Canada, 112 in EU countries
- Never put a used fire extinguisher back on a stand
- Have the unit serviced by a qualified professional, or replace with a new one
- Replace portable single-use fire extinguishers after 6 years, even if it has never been used

References

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Portable fire extinguishers. Sept 9, 2022. Retrieved from https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/fire_extinguishers.html