

INSPECTION, MAINTENANCE, TESTING, AND RECHARGING PERIODS FOR PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Introduction.

Almost all fires are small in their incipient/ initial stage and can be put out quickly if the proper firefighting equipment is available and the person discovering the fire has been trained to use the equipment at hand. Most facilities turn to portable fire extinguishers for fighting incipient stage fires. The requirements for portable fire extinguishers in general industry are governed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and as per Indian Standards by IS 15683, IS 10658, IS 13386, IS 15385, IS 2878 etc.

In order to ensure that they are available and operate properly when needed, healthcare facilities properly inspect, test and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers are considered essential. Having a healthy and knowing how to use a fire extinguisher could save your life in an emergency. The key to putting out a fire with an extinguisher is to use the PASS strategy: Pull the pin, Aim the hose at the base of fire, Squeeze the hose and move it in a Sweeping motion. However, before you use a fire extinguisher to put it out, it's very important that you decide whether or not it's appropriate for you to be fighting the fire, and whether or not you will be able to put it out. **If you don't think you can fight the fire, or if you have any doubts about the correct type of extinguisher to be used or the health of the extinguisher, evacuate the building immediately from the nearest exit and call for help/ Fire Department.**

Portable Fire Extinguishers can be maintained by following these steps: -

Portable fire extinguishers are required to be visually inspected when initially placed in service and at least monthly thereafter. These visual inspections, intended to help ensure that each extinguisher is in its designated place and will operate if needed, can be performed by facility staff.

A pressure gauge in the "normal" or "operable" range is not a 100 percent guaranty that the extinguisher will perform as intended. A broken seal, for example, may be an indication that someone has used the extinguisher and discharged a portion of the contents too small to affect the pressure gauge. It is important to recharge partially used extinguishers also. Hence, monthly inspection to verify a number of things including are considered mandatory:

- Extinguishers are in their designated places.
- There are no obstructions to access or visibility.
- Safety seals are not broken or missing.
- There is no evidence of physical damage, corrosion, leakage or clogged nozzle.
- Pressure gauge readings are in the proper range or position.
- Operating instructions are legible and facing outward.
- Fullness – confirmed by weighing or lifting.

Where circumstances warrant, some fire extinguishers may have to be inspected more frequently. Examples of such circumstances might include extinguishers that are oftentimes found obstructed during monthly inspections or extinguishers located in areas where they are subject to



tampering, theft or mechanical injury. Obviously, any problems found during the monthly inspection must be corrected immediately. Some problems trigger a need for full maintenance or even replacement of the extinguisher. Full maintenance procedures must be performed whenever an inspection of a rechargeable fire extinguisher reveals any of the following problems:

- Operating instructions are not legible.
- Safety seals are broken or missing.
- Fullness can't be confirmed (as determined by weighing or lifting).
- There is evidence of physical damage, corrosion, leakage or a clogged nozzle.
- Pressure gauge readings are not in the operable range or position.

Maintenance.

“Maintenance” is a thorough examination and repair, as needed, of your facility’s portable fire extinguishers. Maintenance is required at least once a year – more frequently when indicated by a routine monthly inspection, as discussed earlier. Maintenance is also required whenever extinguishers undergo hydrostatic testing.

Because maintenance is required to include a thorough examination of the mechanical parts, extinguishing agent and expelling means of each portable fire extinguisher, it must be performed by an approved extinguisher servicing company. It should be noted that new tamper seals are required to be installed whenever maintenance is performed on rechargeable fire extinguishers.

Hydrostatic Testing.

At certain intervals, fire extinguishers are required to be pressure tested using water or some other non-compressible fluid to help prevent unwanted failure or rupture of the cylinder. This is called hydrostatic testing and includes both an internal and external examination of the cylinder. Because this testing requires special training and equipment, it needs to be performed by an approved extinguisher servicing company.

Documentation Requirements.

Almost as important as conducting required inspection, testing and maintenance is documenting the fact that it occurred. It requires that these services be properly recorded. What follows is a brief synopsis of some of the major documentation requirements you need to be aware of:



✓ Monthly Inspections. Requires that records be kept of all extinguishers inspected, including those needing corrective action. The date the inspection was performed and the initials of the person performing the inspection must be recorded on a tag or label attached to each extinguisher. As an alternate, the monthly inspections can be recorded on an inspection checklist maintained on file or in an electronic system that provides a permanent record.

✓ Annual Maintenance. Annual maintenance is also required to be recorded on a tag or label attached or stuck to each extinguisher that indicates the month and year the maintenance was performed and the name of the person or company performing the service. In addition to the tag or label, it is recommended that a permanent record be kept for each extinguisher that indicates at least the following:

- The date maintenance was last performed and by whom.
- The date the extinguisher was recharged and by whom.

Radcorps Fire & Safety Pvt Ltd.

GOVT. LICENCED AGENCY

AN ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED COMPANY

-
- The date yearly maintenance was last performed and by whom.
 - The date the extinguisher was hydrostatically tested and by whom.

✓ Recharging. When extinguishers are recharged, a tag or label must be attached to each extinguisher that indicates the month and year recharging was performed and the name of the person or company performing the service.

✓ Hydrostatic Testing. Requires that a permanent record be maintained for each cylinder tested. the hydrostatic test must have the test information recorded on a label, affixed to each extinguisher that indicates the month and year the test was performed, the test pressure used, and the initials or name of the person performing the service and the name of the company.

✓ It's important that at least two people in your facility know where the documentation on your facility's fire extinguishers is kept to increase the likelihood that it can be readily provided if requested during an inspection. This documentation needs to be maintained for the life of the extinguishers.

!!! If you have any requirements for.....

- **Supply, Installation, AMC, (Portable & Fixed Fighting Equipment and Accessories)**
- **Advisory, Consulting, SoP Formulation & Documentation.**
- **Training & Refresher Courses.**
- **Fire Audits.**

..... **We are a Click/ Call Away!!!**

!! Don't forget to spread the message to your family, friends & colleagues too !!

For more details and other products range kindly visit our website www.radcorps.com