

Do you have a good system for fire extinguisher inspection and service?

By employees

Train as many employees and volunteers as possible in the proper use of fire extinguishers. They should ensure extinguishers are housed in the proper places and free of tampering. Employees should help ensure extinguishers are:

- Hung in a conspicuous place
- Serviced annually
- Hydrostatically tested
- Dated
- Not subject to freezing (if water type)

The date of each inspection and the initials of the person performing the inspection should be recorded. Records should also be kept for those extinguishers that are found to require corrective action.

By outside sources

Your fire extinguishers should be inspected or recharged annually. A tag should be attached to each, showing the date of the inspection or recharge. This work should be done by a qualified person (contact your fire department) who also should hydrotest your extinguishers according to manufacturer's specifications. Replace extinguishers if they show evidence of corrosion or mechanical injury.



Listening. Learning. Leading.®

3000 Schuster Lane | P.O. Box 357 | Merrill, WI 54452-0357
(800) 554-2642 | www.churchmutual.com

Para obtener asistencia inicial en español, llame al (800) 241-9848,
o por correo electrónico a la dirección, espanol@churchmutual.com

Listening. Learning. Leading. is a registered trademark of
Church Mutual Insurance Company.

LC-104 (2-2015) © 2007 Church Mutual Insurance Company

Proper Use and Care of Your Fire Extinguishers



Listening. Learning. Leading.®

Are your buildings equipped with the proper type and number of well-maintained fire extinguishers?

Each of your buildings should be equipped with multipurpose (ABC) fire extinguishers. There should be at least one extinguisher for every 2,500 square feet of floor area. Travel distance to reach a fire extinguisher should not exceed 50 feet.

Class A fires

Class A fires are ordinary burning combustibles, such as paper, cloth, wood, trash and the like, and apply to building structure and contents. We recommend extinguishers with a minimum Underwriters Laboratories (UL) classification of 2-A. The UL classification indicates the relative extinguishing capacity of various models or manufacturers.

Class B, C and K fires

Hazardous locations within your buildings, such as kitchens and cooking areas, paint or combustible liquid storage, electrical equipment apparatus or main panels and boiler and furnace rooms, require additional extinguishers suitable for Class B (paints, cooking, greases), Class C (electrically energized) and Class K (combustible cooking media) fires. Travel distance to reach any extinguisher provided for a specific hazardous location should not exceed 30 feet.

We recommend extinguishers with minimum UL classifications as follows for the levels of hazard indicated:

- Ordinary combustibles – 2-A
- Kitchens – Class K units (2-A:C:K or 2-A:1-B:C:K or similar rating)
- Boiler and furnace rooms – 20-B:C
- Electrical equipment, apparatus or main panels – 20-B:C
- Combustible liquid storage – 20-B:C
- Extinguisher requirements can be satisfied with units having multiple classifications as 2-A:20-B:C, 2-A:40-B:C, etc.

Are your fire extinguishers visible and accessible?

Extinguishers should be conspicuously placed where they will be easy to locate and reach in the event of fire. Placing them adjacent to normal paths of travel is the best idea.

A sufficient number of them should be placed on each floor so that not more than 50 feet of travel is required to reach the nearest one.

Extinguishers that weigh fewer than 40 pounds should be installed so that the top of the extinguisher is not more than 5 feet above the floor. Keep in mind that they should not be exposed to freezing temperatures, particularly if they are the water type.

Is it clear how your extinguishers should be used?

Most fire extinguishers are equipped with operating instructions.

Anyone who spends a lot of time in your building should be so familiar with those instructions that he or she would not have to stop to read them in an emergency. If your extinguishers are in cabinets, place them so the instructions face outward.

How much can a fire extinguisher do?

Fire extinguishers are intended as a first line of defense to cope with fires of limited size. An instantaneous judgment must be made as to whether the fire is small enough to employ a fire extinguisher or to evacuate. If any doubt exists, evacuate. Fire extinguishers are needed even if your property is equipped with automatic sprinklers, standpipe and hose or other fixed protection.

