



Monthly Visual Inspection of Extinguishers

Toolbox Talk Lesson Plan

Have at least one extinguisher on hand for demonstration. One of various types of extinguishers is preferred

One of the commonly cited deficiencies of New Jersey public employers is not inspecting fire extinguishers on a monthly basis. Monthly inspections are primarily visual and can be completed by any trained employee. This Bulletin will review the inspection and maintenance of fire extinguishers.

Fire extinguishers must receive various periodic inspections and testing over their lifetime. Employees who conduct monthly inspections should be aware of each and how they relate to their inspections. Let's perform a monthly inspection of a fire extinguisher together.

1. The fire extinguisher must be mounted on a hook or in a cabinet. Remove or report any visual obstructions.
2. Check the tag from the extinguisher service company. The last inspection by a state-certified contractor can not be more than a year old.
3. Inspect the shell, handle, and hose, and nozzle / horn. All should be in good condition. Instructional and HMIS labels should be legible.
4. Multipurpose dry powder (ABC or BC), pressurized water, Class K, and halon / halon replacement extinguishers will have a gauge. If there is a gauge, check that the yellow indicator is in the green (proper pressure) area. Anywhere in the green area is acceptable.

Carbon dioxide extinguishers do not have a gauge, so this step can be skipped.

5. All fire extinguishers will have a pin and a seal. Check that the pin is in place and the plastic seal is intact.
6. Lastly, each fire extinguisher must be lifted, or hefted to determine if the extinguisher feels heavy or full. As long as it doesn't feel empty, and the other items above are proper, the extinguisher passes.
7. Date and initial the rear of the service tag. That completes the monthly inspection.

While not required as part of the monthly inspection, the employee may also check that the state-certified contractor has not missed anything during their yearly inspection, called 'maintenance' by NFPA standards.

- Carbon dioxide extinguishers have their manufacture date stamped into the metal of the cylinder by the neck. They must be pressure (hydrostatically) tested every 5 years. The date is stamped into the metal of the cylinder by the neck. Check the dates. The latest date must be less than 5 years old.
- Pressurized water and Class K extinguishers have their manufacture date on one of the instructional labels. They must be hydrostatically tested every 5 years. The date of the last test will be on a plastic ring around the neck of the extinguisher or on a label. Check that the latest date is less than 5 years old.
- Dry chemical and powder extinguishers must be internally inspected every 6 years. Check that the date on the plastic ring is less than 6 years old. The extinguisher must also be pressure tested every 12 years. Look for a plastic ring or label.

*This lesson plan is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, please contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046. **Presenters should attach sign-in sheet to this lesson plan.***