



The three elements needed to have and maintain a fire are **heat, oxygen, and fuel**.

Fires are classified as A, B, C and D:

- **CLASS A:** Ordinary combustible material such as wood, paper, and trash.
- **CLASS B:** Flammable liquids (and gases) such as gasoline, paints, and flammable solvents.
- **CLASS C:** Energized electrical circuits.
- **CLASS D:** Combustible metals like magnesium, sodium, and zirconium.

Using the proper fire extinguisher is extremely important and the use of the wrong type may actually spread the fire. All fire extinguishers have a label to tell you what fires they can extinguish. A fire extinguisher labeled with “BC” can only be used on Class B or C fires. “ABC” extinguishers can be used on Class A, B and C fires.

Frequency of Service for Extinguishers

- **All extinguishers must be serviced and tagged annually.**
- Dry Chemical extinguishers must be emptied, serviced, and refilled **every 6 years** by a company specialized in this service.
- Dry Chemical extinguishers must be hydro tested and serviced **every 12 years** by a company specialized in this service.
- A designated person, such as a master mechanic, safety manager, or someone who

has been trained should do a **visual inspection on a monthly basis**.

- If inspection meets approval, the competent person initials and dates the tag on the extinguisher.
- Extinguishers are tagged the day of service and are **good for 1 year** from stamped date.

Inspection Tips for Cartridge Operated Fire Extinguishers

- Look for dents, deep scratches, cuts, and missing parts.
- If there are any dents or deep scratches in the shell, the extinguisher must be destroyed.
- If there are cuts on the hose or any missing parts, it needs to be removed from service and repaired.
- Make sure that the seal is intact, if not it needs to be serviced.
- Make sure the red indicator button is down, if it has popped up it has been used and needs to be serviced.
- If the service tag is missing or a year has elapsed from the date punched, it needs to be serviced.
- If the hose and handle are clogged or damaged it needs to be serviced.
- If the extinguisher looks good and seal and indicator are in place with the tag up to date, then the fire extinguisher is ready for use.

Inspection Tips for Stored Pressure Extinguishers

- Look for dents, deep scratches, cuts, and missing parts.
- If there are any dents or deep scratches in the shell, the extinguisher must be destroyed.
- If there are cuts on the hose or any missing parts, it needs to be serviced.

- Make sure that the seal is intact. If not, it needs to be serviced.
- If the needle on the gauge is showing recharge or overcharge it needs to be serviced.
- If the service tag is missing or a year has elapsed from the date punched, it needs to be serviced.
- If the handles or safety pin is bent, twisted, or missing it needs to be serviced.
- If the extinguisher meets the inspection criteria, and pin and seal are intact, an inspection tag with the current date should be attached. It is ready for use.

Other Helpful Hints

- If the extinguisher is on a moving vehicle, occasionally turn it upside down and strike it with a rubber mallet to loosen the powder.
- Never use a water pressure fire extinguisher or a fire hose on an electrical fire.
- Most extinguishers available for use on construction sites are ABC rated, which means they can be used to fight paper, wood, electrical or flammable liquid type fires.
- Be sure that access to fire extinguishers is never obstructed and that they are in clearly visible locations.
- Fire extinguishers must be in the immediate work area when hot work is performed.
- Only employees trained and proficient in the use of fire extinguishers may use them. Assure that all employees know how to inspect and use extinguishers.
- Don't be a hero! If a fire is too big, don't try to attempt putting it out – call the local Fire Department.