Portable Fire Extinguishers Policy

Applicable Legislation:

Ontario Fire Code (O.Reg. 388/97)
Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), O.Reg. 851 Industrial Establishments, Section123(1)
NFPA 10, Portable Fire Extinguishers

Intent:

To outline essential requirements of the Ontario Fire Code regarding portable fire extinguishers, and to promote the placement of fire extinguishers in the workplace that is appropriate for the potential fire risk.

Definitions:

Class A extinguisher

designed for fires fuelled by ordinary combustibles such as wood, paper textiles (e.g. pressurized water).

?Class B extinguisher

designed for fires fuelled by flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil, grease, tar, paint (e.g. carbon dioxide).

?Class C extinguisher

designed for fires in electrical equipment (e.g. carbon dioxide).

?Class ABC extinguisher

a multi-purpose extinguisher (e.g. dry chemical).

?Class D extinguisher

designed for fires fuelled by combustible metals such as magnesium, potassium, powdered aluminum, zinc, sodium, titanium, zirconium and lithium (e.g. sand).

Hydrostatic testing

required every 5 or 12 years on pressure vessels used as fire extinguishers; performed by persons trained in pressure testing procedures.

Inspection

a “quick check” each month that a fire extinguisher is available and will operate; verifies that it is in its designated place, that it has not been actuated or tampered with, and that there is no obvious or physical damage or condition to prevent its operation

Maintenance

a thorough annual examination of the fire extinguisher and any necessary repair or replacement. It will normally reveal if hydrostatic testing or internal maintenance is required. Maintenance is provided by fire equipment service

personnel.

Requirements of the *Ontario Fire Code, Part 6*

Location

6.2.1.3 Portable extinguishers shall be located so that they are easily seen and shall be accessible at all times.
6.2.1.4 Portable extinguishers shall be located in or adjacent to corridors or aisles that provide access to exits.
6.2.1.7 Portable extinguishers that are subject to damage in a corrosive atmosphere shall not be installed where a corrosive atmosphere exists unless supplementary corrosion protection that will protect the portable extinguishers is provided.

S?igns

6.2.1.5 The location of portable extinguishers shall be prominently indicated by signs or markings in large floor areas and in locations where visual obstructions cannot be avoided.

6.2.1.6 Portable extinguishers in proximity to a fire hazard shall be located in a position so as to be accessible without exposing the operator to undue risk.

Distance Above Floor

6.2.4.2 Portable extinguishers with a gross weight greater than 18 kg shall be installed so that the top of the extinguisher is not more than 1.1 m above the floor when the extinguisher is not equipped with wheels.

6.2.4.3 Portable extinguishers having a gross weight of 18 kg or less shall be installed so that the top of the extinguisher is not more than 1.5 m above the floor.

Building Protection

6.2.6.2. Portable extinguishers that are provided to protect a building shall be suitable for fighting Class A fires and be available for use at all times.

Occupancy Protection

6.2.6.3. Portable extinguishers that are provided to protect a hazardous occupancy shall be those required in Section 6.2.6 (4-16) of the Fire Code for fighting class A, B, C and D fires. [i.e. see Section 6.2.6. for guidance on the placement of fire extinguishers in the workplace.]

Inspection

6.2.7.2. Portable extinguishers shall be inspected monthly.

Tags

6.2.7.4(1) Each portable extinguisher shall have a tag securely attached to it showing the maintenance or recharge date, the servicing agency and the signature of the person who performed the service.

Maintenance records

6.2.7.5. A permanent record containing the maintenance date, the examiner’s name and a description of any maintenance work or hydrostatic testing carried out shall be prepared and maintained for each portable extinguisher.

Maintenance After Use

6.2.7.6 Portable extinguishers shall be replaced and recharged after use in conformance with instructions given on

the extinguisher nameplate.

6.2.7.7. Extinguisher shells, cartridges or cylinders that show leakage or permanent distortion in excess or specified limits or that rupture shall be removed from service.

Policy:

1. The University's Fire Division shall provide advice about the selection, placement and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers in the workplace.
2. Training on the safe use of portable fire extinguishers shall be provided annually for employees. The University's Fire Division shall co-ordinate fire safety training initiatives.
3. The use of portable fire extinguishers shall be reported immediately to the University Fire Division to ensure replacement.

Guidelines:

Every fire extinguisher in the workplace must be inspected monthly. Visual inspections may be done by employees to verify:

- the extinguisher is located in close proximity to a potential hazard;
- the unit does not appear or feel empty;
- the locking pin is intact and sealed;
- the pressure is within the correct range;
- there is no obvious physical damage, corrosion, leakage or clogged nozzle;
- the area around the fire extinguisher is clear of obstructions;
- the location of the fire extinguisher is conspicuous.

Inspection tags are available from Security Services upon request. Any problems must be reported to the workplace supervisor. The Fire Division will provide advice about maintenance and service for fire extinguishers, and keeping maintenance records.

Reusable fire extinguishers must be recharged after every use or when the gauge indicates a condition less than fully charged. Contact the Fire Division to enquire about professional inspections, recharging, and testing of portable fire protection appliances.

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