

Safety Facts:

Fire Extinguisher – Inspection and Maintenance*

Someone yells, “Fire, Fire, Fire!” and you discover a small fire at a workstation. You look for the nearest fire extinguisher, grab it but find out that it’s empty. Someone has already pulled the pin, the gauge reads empty, and there is no weight to this ten-pound fire extinguisher.

You look for another fire extinguisher and find that numerous pallet loads block it.

You find a third fire extinguisher. You remember the acronym PASS from training: Pull the pin, Aim the fire extinguisher, Squeeze the handle – and nothing comes out of the fire extinguisher. Too late, the fire is too big, and it’s time to evacuate.

We could have prevented this scenario if we:

- Report when we use a fire extinguisher
- Maintain clear access to fire points at all times
- Perform monthly inspections and annual fire extinguisher maintenance

In BC, we have adopted the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) *10 Standard for Portable Fire Extinguisher*. This standard provides information regarding the selection, installation, inspection, maintenance, and recharging of fire extinguishers.

Preventive next steps

NFPA 10 prescribes that you inspect portable fire extinguishers, either manually or electronically, at intervals not exceeding 31 days. The inspection includes the following:

- Location of the extinguisher in a designated place
- Visibility of the extinguisher or means of indicating the extinguisher location
- Access to the extinguisher
- Pressure gage reading or indicator in the operable range or position
- Fullness – determined by weighing or hefting
- Condition of tires, wheels, carriage, hose, and nozzle for wheeled extinguishers
- Indicator for non-rechargeable extinguisher using push-to-test pressure indicator

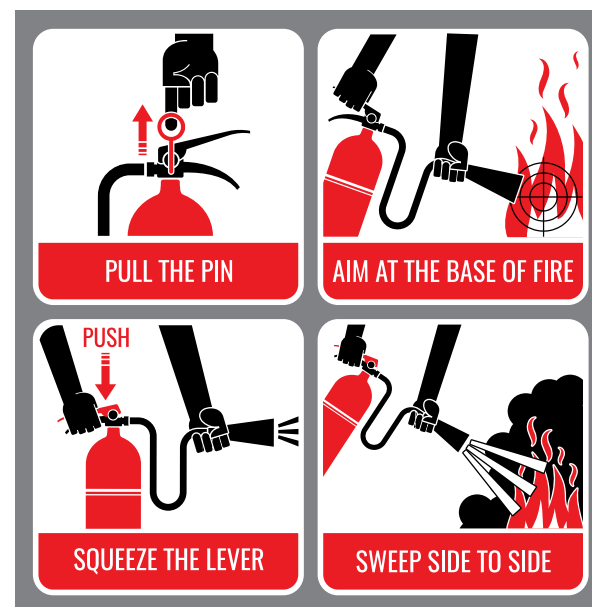
Fire extinguishers exposed to severe hazards, abnormal temperatures, corrosive atmospheres, etc. will require further inspection. See NFPA 10 for more information.

Record the inspection results on the tag on the fire extinguisher and your inspection checklist. You need to keep records for 12 months.

Have your fire extinguishers maintained annually by someone certified (for example, your local fire prevention company).

Report the following to your supervisor:

- If you use a fire extinguisher
- You notice damage to a fire extinguisher
- The access to the fire extinguisher is blocked
- The inspection tag is missing from the fire extinguisher
- The fire extinguisher has not been inspected monthly
- The fire extinguisher is past due for its annual maintenance



For additional resources visit:

NFPA: [NFPA 10: Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers](#)

