

▶ Fire Extinguisher – SAFETY CHECKS

Pressure Gauge:

- ▶ Good condition and undamaged
 - ▶ Needle must be in 'green' area
- If needle not in green area, remove extinguisher for servicing

General condition:

- The following must be in good condition and undamaged
- ▶ Handle
 - ▶ Hose
 - ▶ Cylinder body
 - ▶ Labels (dates and detail clearly visible)

Suitability:

- Extinguisher must be suitable for:
- ▶ The size and type of the workplace
 - ▶ The type of fire that could happen



Pull Pin:

Must be:

- ▶ In good condition and undamaged
- ▶ Securely fastened within handle
- ▶ Held in place by tamper seal

Maintenance:

Extinguishers must be:

- ▶ Serviced annually
- ▶ Marked with next due date OR maximum period of use (mm/yy). For example:

SERVICE RECORD			
NEXT DUE DATE	RECHARGED	PRESSURE TESTED	INSPECTED BY

Access:

Extinguisher must be kept in a location that is:

- ▶ Easily accessible
- ▶ Kept clear
- ▶ Marked with the appropriate signs



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Have you selected the right types of fire extinguisher for your workplace?

Your fire extinguisher(s) must be appropriate for the type of fire likely to be encountered. The table below offers a general guide, but specialist advice may be necessary for particular situations.

Type of Fire	Suitable fire extinguisher
Fires involving solid materials such as wood, paper or textile	Water, foam, multi-purpose powder extinguishers
Fires involving flammable liquids	Foam
Electrical fires	Carbon dioxide
Fires involving gases	Dry powder (but seek specialist advice – in some instances it may be better to let the fire burn until the fuel supply can be cut off)

Have you provided enough fire extinguishers for your workplace?

The number of fire extinguishers provided should be based on the size of the workplace, the equipment and substances it contains, and the number of people present. For smaller premises having one or two portable extinguishers may be all that is required. In larger or more complex premises, a greater number of portable extinguishers sited throughout the premises are likely to be required (and other means of fighting fire may also need to be considered). If unsure, check with your local Fire Authority.

Are the fire extinguishers kept in the most suitable place?

Fire extinguishers should be placed where employees can easily access them, without exposing themselves to danger, and where it will give the best chance of putting out a fire in its early stages or to aid in escape from the fire. Fire extinguishers are generally placed on exit routes near the exit doors, although those provided for a specific hazard should be placed near that hazard.

Fire extinguishers should be permanently located in a fixed place – either wall-mounted or placed on a stand.

Are signs needed to mark the location of the fire extinguishers?

If the fire extinguisher is not in clear view then signs should be used to mark its location. The image opposite is normally accompanied by information on the content of the fire extinguisher and what type of fire it is suitable for.



Have the people likely to use the fire extinguishers been given adequate instruction and training?

People need to know what to do in the event of discovering a fire, how to raise the alarm, what to do when the alarm sounds and how to use a fire extinguisher. Fire drills should be held at least annually. Ask your fire safety engineer to demonstrate the use of a fire extinguisher (outside) whenever one of your extinguishers is due for a test discharge.

Maintenance and Inspection

Fire-fighting equipment must be inspected and maintained as often as necessary to keep it in good working order, and must be serviced annually by a competent person (usually a fire safety engineer).

Record Keeping

Keep a record of all equipment inspections / servicing, staff training and fire drills. A fire register is useful for this purpose.

What to expect when the fire safety engineer calls

Your fire safety engineer will visually inspect all fire-fighting equipment to make sure it is in good condition. They will also weigh each extinguisher, test the gauge and replace the seal where the hose joins the cylinder. Each extinguisher should be test discharged and refilled every 3 years.

Your fire safety engineer should give you a certificate of service for your equipment once the work is complete.

Further Information

Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 Chapter 1 of Part 2: Workplace – available at www.hsa.ie
Your local Fire Authority can provide specific advice and information about fire safety.