

# Extinguishers: Replace Faded or Damaged Extinguisher Labels

By Mark Conroy

Labels that show fire type(s) and operating instructions are provided on the front of every new portable fire extinguisher manufactured today. As part of the monthly inspection and annual maintenance, extinguisher labels need to be examined. New labels are needed when problems are discovered. Here is what you need to know to make sure every extinguisher in the field has code-compliant labels.

## Label Requirements

Underwriters Laboratories performance standards (such as UL 299) require manufacturers to install pictographic operating instructions and pictographic fire classes on new extinguishers. Previously, extinguishers had A, B, C, and D labels. Most people do not know what the letters mean. Also a study showed many people took too long to read and understand the old-style operating instructions, whereas the picture labels are much easier to grasp and understand.

## How Labels Get Damaged

Nothing lasts forever, including extinguisher labels. Fading occurs due to many environmental conditions, and they can get scraped and torn in work areas. Unfortunately, this can affect their readability. Consequently, any extinguisher with a label that is impaired needs a new one. But be careful, the label with the listing mark should not be removed, so contact the manufacturer if there is a problem with nameplate listing information.

## Installing New Labels

NFPA 10, *Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers* requires these labels to be examined monthly and at the time of annual maintenance. Where faded, damaged, or missing labels are found, new self-adhesive ones are installed. The following tables provide information on replacement labels.

**Fire Classification Pictorial Labels**

Type	P/N	Symbols
ABC	BL101N	
BC	BL102N	
A	BL103N	

**Combined Fire Classification and Operating Instruction Labels**

Type	Extinguisher w/Hose	Extinguisher w/Nozzle	Extinguisher w/Cartridge
ABC	BL200	BL201	BL207
BC	BL202	BL203	BL208
Water	BL204		
CO <sub>2</sub>	BL206		

Illegible labels serve no purpose and need to be replaced. Modern self-adhesive vinyl labels, from Brooks, revitalize extinguishers with code-compliant information that matches UL and NFPA criteria. Your customers will appreciate your attention to detail and an economic resolution to their code infraction.

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