

Extinguisher Questions & Answers

by Mark Conroy

Extinguisher technicians are expected to know the code requirements and have the knowledge to do the job right. Here are the answers to some common questions that will help you do your job better.

1. What are the extinguisher installation heights?

Extinguishers with a gross weight of 40 lb or less are installed so the top is no more than 5 ft above the floor. Extinguishers greater than 40 lb are installed with the top no more than 3½ ft above the floor.

2. Are extinguisher cabinets permitted to be locked?

Cabinets housing extinguishers are not permitted to be locked unless they are subject to vandalism or malicious use. Where locked, there must be a means of emergency access. Providing a break front panel cabinet or a breaker bar will satisfy these requirements.

3. Do halon extinguishers need to be removed from service?

Halon 1211 extinguishers are permitted to be installed and serviced. This allowance is for existing extinguishers and the installation of new extinguishers.

4. Are vehicle brackets required for extinguishers in vehicles?

Extinguishers installed in vehicles are required to be installed in approved strap-type brackets, specifically designed for the purpose.

5. Are cooking appliances that only burn charcoal or mesquite required to have extinguishers?

These appliances must have either a water extinguisher (2-A) or a Class K extinguisher.

6. What are the installation locations for extinguisher signs?

Where installed, signs must be close to the extinguisher and visible from the normal path of travel.

7. When is a service collar required to be installed?

A service collar must be installed after internal examination, recharging, or hydrostatic testing of any extinguisher that has a valve assembly removed as a part of the service procedure. Pump tanks and cartridge or cylinder-operated extinguishers do not require service collars.

8. Why is a new tamper seal installed annually?

The pull pin is removed yearly to examine for damage or corrosion and to ensure it will work during a fire emergency. An examination is also performed on the valve stem and operating lever.

9. Is there just one type of replacement pressure gauge for extinguishers?

No. Replacement gauges are required to match the charging pressure, be marked for use with the extinguishing agent, and be compatible with the extinguisher valve body. Using only UL listed replacement gauges that match the original gauge ensures compliance to these requirements.

You probably knew the answers to most or all of these questions, but now you have a straight-forward document that will back you up. Keep a copy of this article in case a customer has the same questions and don't hesitate to share the knowledge.

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