

Restaurant Systems: Quarterly Operational Review

By Mark Conroy

Fire extinguishing systems protecting commercial cooking operations require proper care for them to work as intended. The system owner is responsible for performing a monthly “quick-check” inspection, while a fire equipment service technician performs regular semi-annual maintenance, including operational testing and replacement of certain critical parts. Both the monthly inspections and the 6-month maintenance are required by NFPA 17A, *Standard for Wet Chemical Extinguishing Systems*. Every six months might be too long for some systems to go unchecked. Consider offering a quarterly review of the system operational condition. This is a service that will help ensure system operational safety.

✓	Inspection Item
	Maintenance tag is in place and system was serviced within past 6 months
	Protected cooking appliances are in their designated locations
	Protected appliances have not been replaced or altered
	Extinguishing system is in its proper location
	Manual actuators are unobstructed and operational
	Tamper seals are installed and unbroken
	Stored pressure cylinder pressure gauge is in the operable range
	Agent cylinders or agent containers and expellant gas cylinders are not damaged or corroded
	Nozzles are aligned and unobstructed
	Nozzle orifices show no sign of internal blockage
	Nozzle caps or foils are in place and undamaged
	Actuation links are not excessively loaded with grease
	Link detection line, link brackets, and linkage scissors are not excessively loaded with grease
	Releasing devices are in proper working order
	Corner pulleys are aligned and undamaged
	Piping remains as installed and undamaged
	Hose assemblies have no cracks or other damage
	Conduit and fittings are undamaged and are not excessively loaded with grease
	Visual signals are operational

The advantage of having a fire system service technician perform the quarterly operational review is that any deficiencies identified can immediately be remedied by replacing damaged or problematic parts. Additionally, all work done by a service technician is performed in accordance with NFPA requirements and the service manuals, using replacement parts intended for the system. Also some work necessitates recharging and resetting the system, which can only be done by a service technician.

During the next 6-month service call to perform system maintenance, inform the owner that he is ultimately responsible for the care and use of the system. Offer to perform the quarterly operational review of the system. When this service is performed by a trained and qualified service technician, the owner is assured that the system will be operational and will be ready for use in the event of a fire.

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