

## Extinguishers: OSHA Mandates Monthly Extinguisher Inspections

According to OSHA 1910.157, employers are responsible for inspection of their portable fire extinguishers. More specifically, 1910.157(e)(2) requires that extinguishers be visually inspected on a monthly basis. This federal mandate also requires the annual maintenance 1910.157(e)(3), the 6-year teardown, and the 12-year hydrostatic test on dry chemical extinguishers 1910.157(e)(4) currently installed throughout most buildings today.

Although these requirements are similar to those that appear in [NFPA 10, Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers](#)<sup>1</sup>, they are enforced by federal OSHA rather than the local fire official. Where an employer is not in compliance, they can be fined by OSHA for each violation. Along with hefty fines, an OSHA violation carries with it the stigma that an employer's property is an "unsafe workplace". Nobody wants that label.

Since you already perform the annual maintenance, 6-year teardown, and 12-year hydro for your customers, you might want to consider offering to perform the monthly extinguisher inspections. Also, rather than doing the bare minimum required by NFPA 10, offer to perform a more comprehensive check. The advantage of having a technician perform the inspection vs. a building manager is that it is not only more comprehensive, but immediate corrective action can be taken, such as leaving a loaner-extinguisher in the place of one that needs to be serviced.

### Monthly OSHA Portable Fire Extinguisher Inspections

- ☐ Extinguishers are in their designated places
- ☐ Extinguishers are visible; if not visible, extinguisher signs are provided
- ☐ Extinguishers are accessible
- ☐ Extinguishers are examined for physical damage and clogged nozzle
- ☐ Extinguisher tamper seals are not broken or missing
- ☐ Extinguisher pressure gauge readings are in the proper range
- ☐ Extinguishers are hefted or weighed
- ☐ Extinguisher operating instructions are legible and facing outward

OSHA fines are often expensive and can damage an employer's reputation. On the other hand, you can perform those inspections at a reasonable cost and support your customer's fire safety policies. Make sure to share this bulletin with your customers and let them know that you offer this additional service in keeping with the federal OSHA regulations [1910.157, Portable Fire Extinguishers](#)<sup>2</sup>. Best of all, the extinguisher safety checks you perform for OSHA compliance will most likely satisfy the local AHJ for the NFPA 10 monthly quick-checks.

#### References

1. NFPA 10, Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers (2022 Edition), <https://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/all-codes-and-standards/list-of-codes-and-standards/detail?code=10>.
2. OSHA 1910.157, Portable Fire Extinguishers, <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.157>.

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