



Coffee Break Training - Fire Protection Series

Portable Extinguishers: Monthly Inspections

No. FP-2014-39 September 30, 2014

Learning Objective: The student will be able to identify the requirements for monthly fire extinguisher inspections.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 10, *Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers* requires portable extinguishers to be inspected when they are installed and at intervals of not more than 30 days thereafter. Inspections may be performed manually — as illustrated here — or through an electronic monitoring system.

Manual inspections may be performed by the property owner or occupant. The periodic inspection or electronic monitoring of fire extinguishers should include a check of at least the following items:

- The portable extinguishers are in their designated locations.
- There are no obstructions to access or visibility that would prevent the extinguishers from easy use.
- Pressure gauges, if provided, show readings or indications in the operable range.
- For self-expelling extinguishers, cartridge-operated extinguishers, and pump tanks, their fullness is determined by weighing or hefting. “Hefting” is determining the fullness of an extinguisher by feeling its weight.
- For wheeled extinguishers (see Coffee Break Training FP-2014-22), their tires, wheels, carriage, hose and nozzles are checked for good condition.
- For nonrechargeable extinguishers, the push-to-test pressure indicators should be operated.¹

If any deficiencies are found during the inspection, NFPA 10 requires immediate corrective action.

In areas of severe hazards, where there has been a high frequency of fires in the past, in locations that make fire extinguishers susceptible to mechanical injury or physical damage, or where extinguishers are exposed to abnormal temperatures or corrosive atmospheres, they should be inspected to:

- Verify that operating instructions on nameplates are legible and face outward.
- Check for broken or missing safety seals and tamper indicators.
- Confirm that there is no obvious physical damage, corrosion, leakage or clogged nozzle.²

For additional information, consider enrolling in the National Fire Academy’s course “Fire Inspection Principles” (R0220). Course information and registration is available at <http://apps.usfa.fema.gov/nfacourses/catalog/details/47>.



The paper service tag attached to this portable fire extinguisher provides a convenient location to document monthly inspections.

^{1,2} Used with permission from NFPA 10, *Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers*, Copyright © 2013, National Fire Protection Association.

