

## **Section 31: FIRE EXTINGUISHER INSPECTION AND SERVICE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In each work area, each office, and most vehicles, King County has provided one or more portable fire extinguishers. They should be permanently placed in readily accessible, conspicuous locations. When hung on a wall or column, the top should be no more than five feet above the floor and clearly marked with an extinguisher marker sign approximately 8 feet above the floor. In long hallways or areas where the sign may be difficult to see, it should be mounted perpendicular to the wall or column.

### **USE OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

Portable fire extinguishers are used to perform one function only, to put out a small fire. If the fire cannot be extinguished with a small fire extinguisher, retreat from the area and report the fire by calling 911.

Employees must be trained in the general principles of fire extinguisher use when they are first hired and then annually. This can be accomplished by scheduling a training course offered by Safety and Claims Management, or through the use of safety training videos available from Safety and Claims Management. Call 206-477-3370 or 206-477-3371 for more information.

To use a fire extinguisher:

1. Remove the extinguisher (note that extinguishers are heavier than expected for their size)
2. Hold the extinguisher upright
3. Twist and pull ring pin
4. Stand back approximately 8 feet from the fire
5. Aim at base of fire
6. Squeeze lever and sweep side to side

Extinguishers are classified as follows:

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| A     | combustibles, such as wood and paper (stainless steel water extinguishers) |
| B     | flammable liquids  |
| C     | electrical   |
| A,B,C | all types of fires (dry chemical extinguishers)                            |

## **FIRE EXTINGUISHER INSPECTIONS**

To make sure extinguishers are maintained in usable condition, they require an annual and monthly inspections:

1. The annual inspection is performed by the Fire Extinguisher Specialist assigned to Safety and Claims Management. The Fire Extinguisher Specialist makes scheduled rounds of King County properties, checking, hydro testing, refilling, and re-tagging extinguishers as necessary.
2. The monthly inspection of fire extinguishers is performed by a person in the work unit. This person may be an organization's Safety Committee member, a Safety Coordinator, or someone specifically assigned to do this task. Fire extinguishers located in motor pool vehicles shall be inspected by the motor pool, and those located in assigned vehicles shall be inspected by the operator and/or the organization's Safety Committee member, Safety Coordinator, or assigned individual. These inspections are required monthly. The monthly inspection consists of:
  - a) Determine that the annual inspection has been done per #1 above.
  - b) Remove the extinguisher from its resting place (if practicable).
  - c) Check the seal on the latch pin.
  - d) Check the dial indicator. If the indicator is in the green area, the extinguisher charge is OK.
  - e) For dry chemical extinguishers (ABC or BC) turn the extinguisher upside down and shake to loosen the powdered substance inside.
  - f) Sign and date the back of the King County fire extinguisher tag.
  - g) Replace the extinguisher in its proper place.

If any part of the inspection fails, the extinguisher must be repaired or replaced. Follow your work unit's procedure. Some organizations have a centralized location where unusable extinguishers can be exchanged for recharged and certified extinguishers, while others must directly notify Safety and Claims Management, 477-3350. Check with your supervisor for the procedure in your area, or call 206-265-3521 to contact the Fire Extinguisher Specialist.

Safety and Claims Management services, but does not purchase, original fire extinguishers owned by King County. King County has standardized the use of Amerex brand fire extinguishers. By doing so, we significantly reduce the quantity of spare parts needed to support the Fire Extinguisher Maintenance

Program and realize commensurate cost savings.

**REFERENCES**

WAC 296-800-300 Portable Fire Extinguishers