

Inspecting Portable Fire Extinguishers

What types of inspections must be done of Portable Fire Extinguishers (PFE's)?

PFE's must be visually inspected monthly. PFE's are also subject to annual and periodic testing as described below.

Who is responsible for Portable Fire Extinguisher (PFE) monthly inspections and annual testing?

Monthly inspection of PFEs located in common areas (hallways, lobbies and office suites) are conducted by Custodial Staff.

In areas that have restricted access (laboratories, stock rooms and other limited-access research areas), the monthly inspection must be performed by designated laboratory personnel. The Principal Investigator, Laboratory Manager, or Supervisor is responsible for assuring that these monthly reviews are performed and documented as required.

NOTE: You are not required to be certified nor have received special training in order to perform a monthly inspection!

Annual service inspections are conducted by certified/registered technicians contracted by Facilities. Contact EHS for further information or if the tag is out of compliance.

How to perform a monthly inspection on a Portable Fire Extinguisher?

Portable fire extinguishers must be ready for use at all times. The following conditions should be reviewed for all types of extinguishers:

- Ensure that the PFEs are mounted on the hanger or bracket and that the hanger or bracket is securely anchored.
- If located within a fire extinguisher cabinet, make sure the cabinet is **NOT** locked.
- Ensure that access to the PFE is not obstructed and that the PFE is not obscured from view.
- Visually examine the extinguisher to make sure there is no obvious physical damage, leakage or a clogged nozzle.
- Check the pin and plastic seal on the handle. The pin should be secured into the handle with a plastic tie, indicating that the Fire Extinguisher has not been previously discharged.
- For Carbon Dioxide and other extinguishers that do not have a pressure gauge, check for fullness by weighing or by lifting it up to check its 'heft' or fullness.
- For ABC type extinguishers, check the gauge (see below) to verify that the arrow is in the green area, indicating that it has the appropriate amount of pressure to discharge the extinguishing agent.

