

## Subject: How often I should replace my Fire Extinguishers?

Fire Fighting Equipment should be serviced annually in accordance with BS5306. To ensure that Fire Extinguishers are in good working order, they must have:

1. A commissioning service
2. An annual service
3. An extended service or be replaced every 5 years

Note: The exception to the 5-year replacement are CO2 Fire Extinguishers which should be “hydraulically tested” on a 10-yearly basis.



### Fire Extinguisher Commissioning

Fire Extinguishers do not come ready commissioned because they could be damaged, discharged or have lost pressure during delivery. Therefore, BS 5306 part 3 recommends that Fire Extinguishers are commissioned on-site by a competent person.

BS 5306-3 (Clause 5.1) states “*All extinguishers should be subject to commissioning on initial positioning. The commissioning of an extinguisher should be carried out by a competent person. Upon removal from its packaging and transit protection, and immediately prior to placing in its designated place, the extinguisher should undergo the sequence of commissioning service actions taking into account the safety precautions. Upon completion of the above procedures the extinguisher should then be installed and positioned in accordance with BS 5306-8.*”

## Fire Extinguisher Maintenance

Fire Extinguishers should be regularly checked by the nominated person to make sure that appliances are in their proper position and have not been tampered with. Your monthly inspection should provide a good indication of the overall health of the Fire Extinguishers.

You should check:

- The fire extinguisher is still present in its designated location
- No damage has occurred to the equipment
- No obstructions are blocking the equipment from view or from easy access
- The fire extinguisher is fully charged and operational

However, if a Fire Extinguisher is damaged or unable to be used safely, it should be replaced immediately. If the Fire Extinguisher has been discharged, it is to be recharged or replaced and the used fire extinguisher returned to your service provider for refilling and re-issuing. Fire Extinguishers should also be routinely inspected by a competent service technician to ensure they have not been discharged or lost pressure.

BS 5306-8 (Clause 4.7) states “The Extinguishers referred to in this part of BS 5306 should be commissioned, inspected, tested and maintained by a competent person in accordance with BS 5306-3 annually”. A competent person should also replace fire extinguishers that are no longer usable with serviceable extinguishers.

## Fire Extinguisher Extended Service or Replacement

The British Standard sets out works which should be completed for an extended service which applies to water, foam and dry powder Fire Extinguishers which should be tested by discharge on a 5-yearly basis.

Dry powder and foam type Fire Extinguishers are not suitable for test discharging on site for environmental reasons. These appliances are therefore replaced on a new-exchange basis. This approach means that works can usually be completed in one visit.

The new-exchange system means that Fixfire® provides a new warranted extinguisher of the same type and remove the existing extinguisher which is due for extended service.

We maintain record cards for each site, which detail the location, age and type of each Fire Extinguisher. This information enables us to predict 'extended service' work prior to each visit so we can come prepared.

Following each inspection, we issue a Service Report and Certificate of Inspection.

Got a question about Fire Extinguishers? Need Fire Safety Compliance advice? Get in touch today!

*For over 45 years, Fixfire® has been providing quality products, systems and services for Life & Property Protection. Whatever your requirement, please call our Compliance Team for expert advice and a refreshingly different approach.*

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