

FIRE EXTINGUISHER FACT SHEET

2016

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Introduction

To highlight the effectiveness of extinguishers in the early stage firefighting, a UK study performed by FETA (Fire Extinguishing Trades Association) and IFEDA (Independent Fire Engineering and Distributors Association) reviewed over 2100 fire incidents and found that in 80% of the cases a portable fire extinguisher successfully extinguished the fire and in 75% of those cases, the fire department was not required to attend. Both Australian and international fire statistics show that 95% of all fires are found to be extinguishable if the correct fire extinguisher is applied promptly.

Why fire extinguishers are required in your premises

Commercial premises or public meeting places need to comply with Australian Standard 2444-2001 as governed by the National Construction Code of Australia 2012 and/or the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations applicable to your state.

There are no requirements for private dwellings, unless there is a requirement under the conditions of an approved Development Application for the dwelling.

Selection, Distribution, Mounting and Display

AS 2444-2001 Portable Fire Extinguishers and Fire Blankets - Selection and location, sets out criteria for the selection of portable fire extinguishers and specifies requirements for their application, location and distribution. Advice on the selection, distribution mounting and display of your fire extinguishers should be sought from your local service provider.

Types of Fire Extinguishers

Information on the different types of fire extinguishers and their suitable applications is available on www.ansvarrisk.com.au Fact sheet Portable Fire Extinguisher Guide.

Servicing of fire extinguishers

Firefighting equipment such as: fire extinguishers, fire hose reels, fire blankets etc., are required to be inspected and certified on a six monthly basis in accordance with relevant Australian Standards. Owners/occupiers of buildings may also be required by the local council to provide evidence that fire equipment has been supplied and/or maintained in accordance with relevant Australian Standards where the site is the subject of a development consent. Furthermore, your Insurer may also require evidence that regular maintenance has been carried out.



Training

Research has shown that many people are fearful of fire extinguishers or do not understand how to operate a fire extinguisher in an emergency. Fire extinguishers are quick and easy to use if personnel are provided with a basic level of fire extinguisher training so that they can identify the class of the fire that is burning, identify the appropriate fire extinguisher to use and effectively operate the fire extinguisher in a range of circumstance

After attending a basic fire extinguisher training session (where each participant operated a fire extinguisher on a real fire) over 90% of people operated the fire extinguisher correctly on their second attempt and they were 33% more effective in extinguishing the fire (they selected the correct fire extinguisher, they cooled the area after the fire was out and they aimed at the base of the fire).

By providing your staff with basic fire safety training you will increase the knowledge of fire safety within your workplace and grow the confidence and competence of your staff in responding to an emergency and you are encouraging your staff to extinguish small workplace fires before they grow large and potentially interrupt your business operations.

Research Sources:

- <http://www.engageinc.net/life-and-fire-safety-blog/the-importance-of-fire-extinguishers>
- www.fsaus.com.au
- <http://www.firesys.com.au/Frequently-Ask-Questions-pg14873.html>
- www.fpaa.com.au

Checklist

- Have sufficient fire extinguishers been provided?
- Are the fire extinguishers the correct type and size?
- Are the fire extinguishers securely mounted to the walls?
- Are the fire extinguishers clearly visible, and if not, has their location been adequately signposted?
- Have the fire extinguishers been serviced within the last 6 months, and have service tags been provided?
- Have staff been trained to use the fire extinguishers?
- Have records of training been retained?

For more information on what to consider, please get in touch with our Customer Risk Solutions team riskolutions@ansvar.com.au

This 'Knowing Risk' Fact Sheet is provided to Ansvar Insurance Ltd clients for informational purposes only and should not be used or considered as a comprehensive coverage of the topic discussed. As this information is of a general nature you should consider obtaining professional advice to ensure that your own circumstances are properly considered.

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