

Brief Guide to BS 5306-3:2009

BS 5306-3:2009 issued and effective from 31st July 2009 has a number of significant changes which will affect the portable fire extinguishers within premises, as follows:-

1) **Fire Legislation**

Within the definitions of the standard it is stated that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001 are the current UK legislation.

2) **Competent Person**

The 'Competent Person' (Service Technician) is defined as a person with the qualifications, training and experience, with access to the relevant tools, equipment and information, manuals and knowledge of any special procedures recommended by the manufacturer of an extinguisher to carry out the maintenance procedures.

3) **Responsible Person**

The standard clearly defines the responsible Person as 'person or persons responsible for or having effective control over, fire safety provisions adopted in or appropriate to the premises or building or risk where an extinguisher is installed'.

4) **Commissioning**

New portable fire extinguishers need to be commissioned by a 'competent person' as defined in 2). Upon removal from its packaging and transit protection, and immediately before placing in its designated place, the extinguisher should undergo the sequence of commissioning service actions described in Annex B, taking into account the safety precautions given in annex C.

5) **Extinguishers manufactured from 2003 onwards without a CE mark**

Any extinguisher manufactured from 2003, which does not have a CE mark is now condemned and should be replaced.

6) **Plastics Headcap Assemblies**

Any fire extinguisher which has a plastic headcap assembly, which is defined as 'component manufactured from plastics designed to retain working pressure upon actuation of an extinguisher, must have the plastics headcap assembly replaced with a new one when the extinguisher is reassembled either before or following extended service (discharge test).

7) **Extinguishers 'Not Maintained'**

Where previously extinguishers which were not maintained could be marked as such, the new standard does not allow for this and where the extinguisher is not maintained, including at the request of the client, it is condemned and should be replaced. This also covers obsolete extinguishers and those where no service schedules are available such as soda acid, inversion to operate, plastic body, riveted body, non refillable and past expiry date and post 2002 with no CE mark types.

8) **Visual Inspection by the Responsible Person**

The responsible person should carry out visual inspections of all extinguishers regularly. These visual inspections should be carried out at least monthly. When circumstances require, inspections to be carried out more frequently.

When carrying out these visual inspections, it should be ensured that:

- a) each extinguisher is correctly located in the designated place
- b) each extinguisher is unobstructed and visible
- c) the operating instructions of each extinguisher are clean and legible and face outwards
- d) each extinguisher has not been operated, and is not obviously damaged or has missing parts
- e) the reading of any pressure gauge or indicator fitted to an extinguisher is within operational and safety limits.
- f) the seals and tamper indicators of each extinguisher are not broken or missing.

The Responsible Person should record the results of these visual inspections and arrange for corrective action, where necessary by a Competent Person. In the event of doubt the Responsible Person should arrange for a Competent Person to examine the extinguisher.

9) **Permanent Replacement of Extinguishers**

It is the duty of the responsible Person to arrange for permanent replacement extinguishers to be put into place as soon as possible after an inspection has shown that any extinguishers should be replaced.