



14. Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Portable Fire Extinguishers Full Service & Inspection

Category:	Fire
Subcategory:	Extinguishing Equipment
Frequency:	Yearly
Status:	Statutory
Type:	Approved Contractor
Priority:	Core
Commonality:	Common

Note: This document provides guidance to support compliance but is not a substitute for professional advice.

Why This Task Matters

Your commitment to maintaining serviceable portable fire extinguishers ensures that first responders have reliable tools to tackle small fires before they escalate. By ensuring these essential devices are properly inspected and maintained in educational settings with diverse fire risks, you protect pupils and staff who may need to use them in science labs, workshops, kitchens, and IT suites. Your expertise in overseeing this critical safety equipment demonstrates your vital role in practical fire prevention.

Task Summary

Statutory: All portable fire extinguishers must be serviced and inspected annually by an approved contractor. This comprehensive maintenance involves checking extinguisher condition, verifying pressure levels, confirming correct positioning, and ensuring compliance with current standards. The service includes visual inspection for damage or corrosion, weight checks to verify contents, pressure testing, and replacement of any faulty units. In education environments, extinguishers often cover high-risk areas such as labs, workshops, kitchens, and IT suites, making compliance critical. The inspection includes checking mounting brackets, signage, and accessibility. Evidence produced includes the contractor's service report detailing all extinguishers inspected and serviced, updated inspection tags showing the service date and next due date, and any recommendations for

replacement or additional equipment.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** Requires portable fire extinguishers to be maintained in good working order
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses):** Provides guidance on fire extinguisher provision and maintenance
- **British Standard BS 5306: Fire extinguishing installations and equipment on premises:** Specifies requirements for extinguisher maintenance and inspection
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice:** Includes guidance on portable fire extinguisher maintenance
- **The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014** (for independent schools): Requires adequate firefighting equipment

Typical Frequency

Portable fire extinguishers must be serviced and inspected annually, with this comprehensive maintenance typically scheduled during school holidays to allow for any replacements or relocations. In educational settings, annual servicing is essential for ensuring extinguisher reliability throughout the academic year. The frequency cannot be reduced as it is a statutory requirement for maintaining firefighting capability.

Applicability

This task applies to all educational establishments with portable fire extinguishers, which is common in virtually all schools and colleges. It is a core statutory task essential for providing first-line firefighting capability. The task applies to all premises with portable extinguishers and is particularly important in buildings with high-risk areas or large numbers of occupants.

Responsible Persons

- **Task Type:** Approved Contractor
- **Contractor Requirements:** This task should be carried out by a competent fire equipment maintenance company holding appropriate certifications. Contractors should be familiar with different types of extinguishers and servicing procedures. Typical cost range: £3-£8 per extinguisher depending on type and quantity.
- **Permit to Work:** No permit to work is typically required, though access to all extinguisher locations is needed.
- **Delivery Model:** Normally contractor-delivered due to the specialist equipment and

technical knowledge required for pressure testing and recharging.

Key Considerations

- **Timing considerations:** Schedule during school holidays to allow for servicing and any replacements
- **Cost implications:** Budget £3-£8 per extinguisher annually for professional servicing
- **Resource requirements:** Allow access to all extinguisher locations and storage areas
- **Potential disruption:** Minimal disruption as extinguishers can be serviced in situ
- **Risk assessment requirements:** Service findings should inform the fire risk assessment

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Ensure the contractor holds appropriate certifications for extinguisher maintenance
- Provide access to all extinguisher locations and storage areas
- Confirm quantities and types of extinguishers requiring service
- Arrange for safe handling of extinguishers during servicing

Tools & Materials

- Extinguisher inventory and location records
- Specialist testing and recharging equipment
- Replacement parts and seals as needed
- New inspection tags and labels
- Safety equipment for handling extinguishers

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Pre-Service Assessment

1. Review extinguisher inventory and previous service records
2. Identify all extinguisher locations and access requirements
3. Check for any damaged or missing extinguishers
4. Prepare servicing schedule and resource requirements

Phase B: Inspection and Servicing

1. Visually inspect each extinguisher for damage, corrosion, or tampering
2. Check mounting brackets and accessibility

3. Verify pressure levels and weight of contents
4. Test discharge mechanisms and nozzles
5. Recharge or replace extinguishers as required
6. Clean and maintain extinguisher bodies

Phase C: Documentation and Certification

1. Update inspection tags with service date and next due date
2. Prepare detailed service report with all findings
3. Document any extinguishers requiring replacement
4. Recommend additional equipment if risk assessment indicates need
5. File all documentation and update records

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Extinguisher pressure must be within manufacturer specifications
- Contents weight must match expected values for full extinguishers
- Discharge mechanisms must operate smoothly without leaks
- Inspection tags must be current and clearly visible

If Results Fail

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. Immediately remove faulty extinguishers from service. Escalate significant issues to facilities management and arrange urgent replacements. Implement temporary measures such as additional extinguishers in affected areas.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

Return all serviced extinguishers to their designated locations. Ensure mounting brackets are secure and signage is correct.

Completion Checks

Verify that all extinguishers have been inspected and serviced. Confirm that inspection tags are updated and visible. Ensure the service report is comprehensive with all recommendations.

Client Oversight Checklist (Before the Visit)

- Confirm contractor's certifications and experience
- Provide extinguisher inventory and location details
- Arrange access to all extinguisher locations
- Schedule during period when access is available

Client Oversight Checklist (During the Visit)

- Observe inspection of extinguisher condition and pressure
- Ensure systematic checking of all extinguishers
- Verify that faulty units are clearly identified
- Confirm comprehensive documentation of findings

Deliverables & Acceptance Criteria (After the Visit)

- Receive detailed service report with inspection results
- Review updated inspection tags on all extinguishers
- Ensure recommendations for replacements are specific
- Confirm that all documentation is complete and accurate

Defects & Follow-up

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. Prioritise replacement of faulty extinguishers. Agree timescales for procuring and installing replacements. Schedule additional inspections if widespread issues are found.

Reinstatement & Sign-off

Confirm all extinguishers are returned to service with updated tags. Complete final sign-off once all documentation is received.

Record-Keeping & Evidence

- **Upload Process:** Upload any required statutory or supporting evidence to the corresponding task form in Compliance Pod.
- **Statutory Evidence:** Service report and updated inspection tags must be retained for at least 3 years.
- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence:** Detailed inspection records and replacement recommendations support audit readiness.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

- **Common mistakes to avoid:** Missing extinguishers in remote locations, not checking pressure levels properly, or failing to replace damaged units promptly
- **Best practices for efficient completion:** Maintain detailed inventory records, conduct pre-service checks, and coordinate with regular maintenance schedules
- **Pro tips for educational settings:** Use servicing visits to train staff on extinguisher use,

check extinguisher suitability for specific risks, and maintain a replacement stock for common types

- **Warning signs that indicate problems:** Frequent pressure loss, damaged brackets, or extinguishers showing signs of use without recorded incidents

Quick Reference Checklist

- Extinguisher inventory and locations reviewed
- All extinguishers visually inspected
- Pressure levels and contents verified
- Discharge mechanisms tested
- Faulty extinguishers identified and replaced
- Inspection tags updated
- Service report prepared
- Evidence uploaded to Compliance Pod

Grouped Tasks

Grouping is feasible; align with related tasks of the same frequency and contractor visit.

Related Tasks

- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Hose Reels Full Service & Inspection
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Shutters & Curtains Full Service & Inspection
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Sprinkler Systems Full Service & Test
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Suppression Systems Full Service & Test
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Smoke Vents & AOVs Full Service & Test
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Fire Hydrants Full Service & Inspection
- Fire - Extinguishing Equipment - Dry & Wet Risers Full Service & Inspection

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Users must ensure that all tasks are carried out in line with current legislation, manufacturer instructions, site-specific risk assessments, and organisational policies. Where necessary, professional advice should be sought from competent and accredited specialists — for example, fire risk assessors, water hygiene consultants, electrical engineers, gas safety contractors, or health and safety advisors.