



**Date: May 2003**

**Subject: Extinguisher Service Terminology**

Portable fire extinguishers are mechanical devices requiring periodic service to ensure reliability and optimum performance. The fire extinguisher service terms and recommendations commonly used have specific meanings and objectives. Unfortunately, this terminology is often improperly used and referenced which creates confusion.

To help clarify some of the key differences, Badger will attempt to summarize the most common service terms and requirements identified within NFPA-10 and CFR-29 OSHA regulations pertaining to fire extinguishers.

**INSPECTION:**

Inspection is required whenever an extinguisher is initially placed into service and regularly thereafter, at intervals that do not exceed *30 days*. Inspection is often defined as a "*Quick Check*" that an extinguisher is readily available and in operating condition. Extinguisher inspection procedures can typically be accomplished visually by personnel having minimal equipment knowledge, but who are able to recognize any potential problems externally visible such as any obvious physical damage, missing tamper seals or out of tolerance pressure gauge readings.

**MAINTENANCE:**

Maintenance is required any time an inspection discrepancy is noted and at regular periodic intervals that do not exceed *1 year*. Maintenance is defined as a "*Thorough Examination*" intended to give maximum assurance that an extinguisher will operate effectively and safely. Extinguisher maintenance examination procedures typically require some form of disassembly along with the use of tools and scales. Personnel performing maintenance must have received the necessary instruction to properly identify various hardware conditions, tolerances, service specifications and the code knowledge to ensure compliance with various regulations. Some jurisdictions require personnel performing extinguisher service and maintenance to be licensed or have certification of having received proper training.

**6-YEAR INTERNAL EXAMINATION:**

The 6-year internal examination requirements only apply to rechargeable stored pressure fire extinguishers having cylinders that have a 12-year periodic hydrostatic retest interval. The internal examination procedure is a maintenance function that involves emptying of subject extinguishers, so that a thorough internal examination can be performed. Internal examinations check the condition of the extinguishing agent, as well as the integrity of the cylinder and various other functioning components. When the applicable internal maintenance procedures are performed during recharge or hydrostatic testing, the next 6 year periodic requirement or window may begin from that date.

**HYDROSTATIC TESTING:**

Hydrostatic testing is the pressure testing of a vessel using a non-compressible medium such as water, to ensure its integrity and safety. Extinguishers are required to be hydrostatically re-tested anytime the integrity of the pressure vessel is questioned and at regular periodic intervals which range between 5 to 12 years. Hydrostatic test intervals are required to be conducted within the calendar year of the specified periodic interval. Hydrostatic testing requires specialized equipment and personnel training.

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact your local Badger equipment distributor, visit the Badger web site at [www.badgerfire.com](http://www.badgerfire.com) or contact Badger at (434)964-3200.