**Fire extinguisher maintenance protocol**

Employers have a legal responsibility under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure that fire extinguishers within the workplace are regularly serviced, so that they are kept in good repair and working order.

To ensure compliance with this legislation, a 'responsible person' should carry out a visual inspection to confirm that extinguishers have not been damaged or accidentally discharged. These inspections should ideally be carried out at monthly intervals, but certainly at least quarterly.

If an organisation employs five people or more, it must also hold written records of all service, maintenance and inspections. This should be recorded in a Fire Log Book.

Extinguishers in commercial or public buildings must be serviced by a competent person (suitably-qualified engineer) to BS 5306-3:2009 once a year.

**Basic Service by a competent person**

The basic service by a competent person should be conducted at least annually (± 1 month) (or some higher frequency if determined by risk assessment).

The specifics of the basic service are complex and will include, depending on extinguisher type, the following:

* External examination for signs of corrosion, dents, splits, gauges or other damage.
* Examination and checking of pressure indicating devices.
* Measurement of pressure, weight, etc to ensure that there is the correct amount of both medium and propellant gas.
* Checking of all applicable parts to ensure good working order (this will include removal of the safety pin, BS 5306-3:2009 compliant pull-tag and other anti-tamper indicators, which, in many cases, will need replacing).
* Mandatory replacement of washers, ‘O’ rings, seals and diaphragms for horns, nozzles, hoses and valves whenever these components are removed.

In addition to the basic service of the equipment, the competent person is also required to make any recommendations to ensure adequate and appropriate cover in compliance with BS 5306-8.

*Extended Service & Overhaul*

Except for CO2 extinguishers and a few certain other exceptions, the extended service is normally carried out after the first five years, and then at five yearly intervals thereafter. This should be arranged at the time of the basic service.

In addition to the procedure followed for the basic service, the extended service includes more rigorous checks including discharge tests.

CO2 extinguishers must be refurbished after ten years.

NKM Fire Protection Limited