



GUIDANCE NOTICE

Inspection of portable fire extinguishers (stored pressure type)

Australian Standard 1851-2012 Routine service of fire protection systems and equipment (AS 1851) requires six monthly inspections of portable fire extinguishers.

The purpose of this guidance is to clarify the requirements for the inspection of water, foam, and dry chemical (stored pressure) portable fire extinguishers onboard domestic commercial vessels. These types of extinguisher are fitted with a pressure gauge to indicate the operable range.

This guidance applies to owners of DCVs who are required to comply with the *National Standard for Commercial Vessels, Part C Section 4 – Fire Safety* (NSCV Part C4), as well as owners of DCVs not subject to the NSCV who are seeking to adopt industry consistent practice for fire safety (i.e. both new and existing vessels).

Six monthly inspections

AMSA accepts that the six monthly checks of water, foam, and dry chemical (stored pressure) portable fire extinguishers, as required by AS 1851 may be conducted by a member of the vessel crew who has a current Certificate of Competency (other than General Purpose Hand).

This does not apply to other extinguisher types, including wheeled extinguishers, which will require servicing by accredited or licensed persons.

This guidance is provided in accordance with NSCV Part C4, sub clause (a) of clause 13.8 (a) (extract below):

13.8 COMPETENCE

Only competent persons or organisations shall undertake the servicing of fire safety equipment. Competence shall be relevant to the particular type of equipment. Competent persons or organisations shall be one of the following -

- a) *Accredited or licensed by an appropriate Authority or fire administration within the jurisdiction;*
- b) *The manufacturer, an agent of the manufacturer or a service station approved by the manufacturer; or*
- c) *Accredited or licensed by a Classification Society.*

NOTE: Subclause a) above provides that members of the vessel's crew may undertake servicing functions specified in AS 1851 to the extent that those functions fall within the crewmember's level of competence.

The six monthly inspection of water, foam, and dry chemical stored pressure portable fire extinguishers by a crew member should be documented, preferably in the vessel log/record book with the date of the inspection and the name and qualification of the crew member who undertook the inspection, as evidence of compliance.

If a vessel record book/log book is not required (by survey), then a signed and dated maintenance record should be kept. The applicable checks are shown in **Attachment 1 – Inspection and Records**.

Alternately, the owner/operator of a vessel may choose to engage an accredited or licensed service provider to service fire equipment/appliances. The service provider will supply a service certificate stating compliance with AS 1851. The owner/operator should retain this service document as evidence of compliance.

An Accredited Marine Surveyor or Marine Safety Inspector may in the course of their duties conduct safety equipment checks on a vessel to ascertain the status and condition of fire equipment/appliances. The onus is on the owner/operator to ensure that they maintain fire equipment/appliances in accordance with their statutory obligations.

Fire equipment/appliances such as water, foam, and dry chemical stored pressure portable fire extinguishers should at all times be in good order and readily available for use. AMSA encourages frequent inspection of fire equipment/appliances as part of the vessel's safety management system.

12 monthly and five yearly service and inspection

An accredited or licensed service provider is required to complete the AS 1851 **yearly** and **five yearly** fire equipment/appliance service and inspection.

Accredited Marine Surveyors or Marine Safety Inspectors will have need to sight a service certificate from a service provider stating that the fire extinguishers/appliances have been serviced in accordance with AS 1851.

Attachment 1 – Inspection and Records

Six-Monthly Service Schedule for Fire Extinguishers / Appliances

Item No.	Item	Action required & pass / fail requirement	Frequency			Records		
			Six monthly	Yearly	Five-yearly	Result	Pass / Fail	Comments
	Accessibility	CHECK that the extinguisher is conspicuous, readily accessible and in its assigned location.						
	Anti-tamper device	CHECK that the anti-tamper device is intact.						
	Exterior and operating instructions	CHECK that the extinguisher is clean and the operating instructions are legible.						
	Maintenance record tag or label	CHECK that the maintenance record tag or label is firmly attached to the extinguisher.						
	External damage	CHECK that the extinguisher, including any attachments, is not damaged (see AS2337.1).						
	External corrosion	CHECK that the extinguisher is not pitted, or otherwise damaged, by corrosion (see Clause 15.2 and AS2337.1).						
	Outlet hose assembly	CHECK that the outlet hose is securely fitted, the nozzle is securely attached, the assembly is free from obstruction, and the hose shows no cracking or other signs of damage or deterioration.						
	Pressure indicator	Where fitted, CHECK that the pressure indicator is legible, registering within the operable range.						
	Contents	Weight the extinguisher to determine that it is fully charged.						
	Signage	CHECK that the location sign is visible in accordance with AS2444.						
	Support bracket	CHECK that the appropriate support bracket is securely attached to wall or other suitable feature.						
	Discharge nozzle	CHECK that the appropriate discharge nozzle is fitted and is not blocked or damaged.						
	Powder – portable extinguishers	Invert the extinguisher and ensure that the powder remains free-flowing.						
	Actuating device	DETERMINE where possible and without discharging any content, that the actuating device is free of corrosion, moves freely and is undamaged.						