

HEALTH AND SAFETY



Extinguishers!

Do I really need that Many Extinguishers?

Your fire extinguisher company has just been in and advised you that you need yet another new extinguisher. Do you really? Why would they do this?

Why do you need extinguishers anyway – I'm not going to use them?

You need them because the law says you do. It falls short of making you use them, so you are alright there, but if you ask me it makes business sense to use them anyway. Article 13 of the Regulatory Reform (fire Safety) Order says that you should have measures in place to fight fire when necessary. And if you do decide to use them you may just save a lot of damage that can occur while you wait for the Fire Service to arrive.

So how many do I need?

This depends on the size of the premises you occupy as well as the types of risk you have. For example the main risks might be just electricity (computers, printers, fan heater) and combustible materials such as paper, cardboard and furniture. Then the duo of water and CO² are usual.

Then there's the size. If it is going to take you a while to get to an extinguisher, you might need to add to the stock.

There are some anomalies with this though. For example foam spray seems to be taking over from water as an extinguishing media. This is mainly due to the electrical safety properties of using foam as opposed to water. I wouldn't advise using foam spray on an electrical fire, but if it happens accidentally there is only a very low risk of shock. Also your extinguisher service engineer might have recommended dry powder instead of CO².

It may be that you require another extinguisher because of alterations to your premises or the introduction of new work equipment. It may just be because the original extinguisher has come to the end of its usable life or is due its discharge test. Discharge tests are where the extinguisher is let off so it can be examined. To make it quicker the engineer will exchange the original for a newly serviced type.

At the end of the day your extinguisher service engineer should be able to justify why you need another extinguisher

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How much am I likely to pay?

That really depends on your service company. If you go for a well-known name, expect to pay for it.

New water extinguishers should be around £60, service/exchange types around £50. Servicing is usually done per extinguisher and should be around £10 each and watch out as there may be some travel to add on.

Anything Else?

Yes absolutely. Get some training for key staff. You need to have the extinguishers around and they will pay dividends in the right hands, so get some training done. Talk to your extinguisher engineer or the local Fire Service.

Help is at hand! As a member of SAIF:

- You can talk to a safety professional at **OSS** simply by calling **01462 472 940**.
- You are also entitled to a **discount** on our fees when we help you with your Health & Safety needs
- We can visit you to see how you are doing when it comes to compliance. This is **Free of Charge** apart from travel costs. So what have you got to lose?