

NOTICE

Portable Fire Extinguisher Servicing

Concern:

Portable Fire Extinguishers sold and serviced in Alberta have been required to be listed and labelled as meeting National Standards of Canada since the publication of the original Alberta Fire Code (AFC).

Extinguisher servicing companies and property owners have come forward with concerns that many portable fire extinguishers found during required inspections and maintenance are not listed and labelled for use in Canada.

Background:

Prior to the publication of the AFC 2014 the code user was directed to NFPA 10 "Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers" Sentence 1.3.1(2) to identify the standards. CAN/ULC Standards are designated as the National Standards of Canada to be utilised when manufacturing and supplying portable extinguishers for use in Canada. Direct reference to these standards is made in the AFC 2014 in Sentence 2.1.5.1.(3).

Portable Fire Extinguishers meeting these standards, and therefore acceptable for sale, use and servicing in Alberta will comply with a-e:

- a) Have metric measures on the label and may have imperial equivalents,
- b) All labels will be bi-lingual in English/French (may be tri-lingual and include Spanish),
- c) Will indicate which CAN/ULC Standard the portable extinguisher meets (e.g. CAN/ULC S504),
- d) Exhibit the mark of a Certification Body as meeting one of the referenced National Standards (CAN/ULC). This mark will most typically be that of ULC (Underwriters Laboratories of Canada):
- e) Other marks which MAY be found on older portable fire extinguishers acceptable for usage in Alberta include:
 - a. Underwriters Laboratories (UL) which indicates that UL (as a Canadian Certification Body) has listed and labelled the extinguisher to the specific National Standard of Canada, or
 - b. Intertek/Warnock-Hersey which indicates that this Canadian Certification body has listed and labelled the extinguisher to the specific national Standard of Canada.



Neither the cUL or WH marks will be found on new portable fire extinguishers.

Portable fire extinguishers which exhibit only a UL label (without the small "c" at the eight o'clock position) are not acceptable for sale, use or allowed to be serviced in Alberta. Special dispensation is allowed for Certified Fire Extinguisher shops to "refill only" vehicle fire extinguishers that have been discharged in an emergency situation from truckers or other travellers from the United States.

We have been made aware that portable fire extinguishers which are not listed and labeled for use in Canada, manufactured after January 1, 1986, have been sold and continue to be serviced in Alberta which is a contravention of Alberta Fire Code 2014. Extinguishers manufactured prior to January 1, 1986 were not required by NFPA 10 to be labeled. Labels are not to be applied to these or any other portable or wheeled extinguishers.

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For more information, please call 1-866-421-6929 or visit www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca.

National Standards of Canada for portable fire extinguishers, ULC, are now harmonized with the North American UL requirements. There are, however, differences between the standards. The UL mark alone, without the small “c” at the eight o’clock position, means that the product complies with **US requirements only**.

In addition, CAN/ULC-S532-07 “Standard for the Regulation of the Servicing of Portable Fire Extinguishers” has a requirement under 9.1 “A portable fire extinguisher shall not be recharged unless it bears a certification mark attesting to its certification by a nationally recognized agency and approved by the authority having jurisdiction or other organization administering these requirements”.

Therefore, the presence of the ULC listing mark on a portable fire extinguisher (or the other two noted above in very few instances) is the only evidence that the portable fire extinguisher complied with the National Standard of Canada when it was manufactured.

Supply and service companies who have sold and/or serviced non-compliant extinguishers in Alberta have contravened the AFC and the terms of their mandatory certification as a portable fire extinguisher shop in Alberta. Some certification bodies inspecting extinguisher shops may not have made this clear during inspections in previous years.

It is also illegal for a fire extinguisher service company to apply a label or Certification Body’s “mark” to a non-Canadian extinguisher, or any extinguisher, other than as part of the required label indicating 6 year maintenance and/or hydro-testing by a certified (listed) service company or as part of a ULC and Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) formally approved Refurbishing Program. Only certain ANSUL portable extinguishers, refurbished by either Century-Vallen or Tyco Fire and Security, are covered by this program. Any other person or shop applying such labels is subject to prosecution under the *Safety Codes Act* and the fraud provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada.

Actions to be taken:

To rectify this issue the following actions are to be taken:

All non-compliant (non-Canadian labeled) portable fire extinguishers in Alberta must be taken out of service and rendered inoperable by December 31, 2021 at the latest. The recommended time of this removal from service is at the next five or six year tear down and/or hydro-test and maintenance.

In addition if a non-compliant fire extinguisher is discharged for any reason this should also trigger the replacement of the extinguisher as it will not be able to be refilled due to only having a UL label.

Taking this action over a reasonable period of time will reduce the financial implications for companies by enabling them to budget for the replacement of portable fire extinguishers. Companies to come into compliance with the AFC 2014 and remove all UL only certified fire extinguishers from service six years from the date of this advisory.

The bodies certifying portable fire extinguisher shops in Alberta to CAN/ULC-S532 (ULC and Intertek) as per the AFC 2014 will be asked to ensure the shops understand their obligations under the Standard and the AFC 2014.