



Fire Extinguisher FAQ's

Question: How much distance must be maintained around a fire extinguisher?

Answer: Neither OSHA nor the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) provide a specific distance that must be left clear around a fire extinguisher. OSHA §1910.157(c)(1), states only employers shall "mount, locate and identify (fire extinguishers) so that they are readily accessible to employees without subjecting the employees to possible injury. NFPA 10, Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers, states, "Fire extinguishers shall be conspicuously located where they will be readily accessible and immediately available, and Fire extinguishers shall not be obstructed." Also, local and state requirements may apply.

If you can quickly go to and easily retrieve an extinguisher, OSHA should be satisfied. However, whether there is a blockage or accessibility issue would be scrutinized by an OSHA inspector. Most employers keep the floor beneath the fire extinguisher clear and will mark that area with tape or floor markings so that nothing is inadvertently placed there.

Question: At what height must extinguishers be mounted?

Answer: OSHA only requires that extinguishers be mounted, located, and identified so that they are readily accessible. However, NFPA 10, Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers, states that units weighing 40 pounds or less be installed such that the top of the unit is not more than five feet above the floor. For units weighing more than 40 pounds, the top of the unit should be no more than 3.5 feet above the floor. There should always be at least four inches between the bottom of the unit and the floor.

