

Glossary of Terms Used on Extinguisher Labels, Service Reports and Invoices

It can be quite a challenge for anyone from outside of the fire industry to decipher the terms used by servicing technicians on their invoices and service reports. These are usually legitimate but to overcome any suspicions we have created this guide to help customers understand the industries own terms for different types of installation or servicing operations. Only a 'Competent Person' – that is a Technician with a BAFE recognised examination certificate either BAFE, FETA, British Fire Consortium or IFEDA and if over 3 years old then this should be supplemented with a Technicians Refresher Certificate from a recognised body can fill in maintenance labels on extinguishers.

These are the typical descriptions of servicing terms generally derived from the current British Standards that are used on service paperwork.

Basic Service	A service carried out <u>at least</u> once per annum by a Competent Person. The recommended tolerance given in BS5306 part 3:2009 allows 11-13 months from the date of the last service.
BS EN3: 1996 (revised 2004)	The European Standard that covers the design, manufacture and testing of portable fire extinguishers. It was this introduction of this Standard in 1996 that where portable fire extinguishers had to become painted red.
BS5306 part 3:2009	The British Standard that provides the recommendations for commissioning and servicing of portable fire extinguishers.
BS5306 part 8:2000	The British Standard that provides the recommendations for the selection and installation of portable fire extinguishers.
BS7863:1996	The British Standard that defines the colour codes used on British portable fire extinguishers to identify the extinguishing medium, e.g. water, foam, powder, CO ² and wet chemical. This can cover an area no greater than 10% surface area of the extinguisher body.
Commissioning Service	The initial service carried out by the 'Competent Person' during installation of the extinguisher. This is a proposed new amendment to BS5306 part 3:2009.
Competent Person	A person with an appropriate qualification; with the knowledge, experience and tools to conduct service work.
Condemned	An extinguisher that is in a dangerous condition and will be safely decommissioned by the extinguisher technician.
Discharge Test and Refill	Refer to Extended Service.
Extended Service	A discharge test and refill carried out by a Competent Person at FIVE yearly intervals to test the correct operation of the extinguisher and internal inspection for corrosion. CO ² , Halon and Nu-Swift primary sealed extinguishers are excluded from having Extended Servicing. This used be called a discharge test and refill or test discharge and refill and the term is still used in the trade as it actually describes the work being carried out.
Gas Cartridge	An extinguisher that is normally un-pressurised but when operated utilises a high pressure gas 'sparklet' cylinder within the body to pressurise the cylinder at the point of use.

Headcap O ring	The headcap is sealed to the body of the extinguisher with an O ring. BS5306 part 3:2009 requires that this is replaced every time the Headcap is removed. This is normally a chargeable routine service part.
Hose/Horn O Ring	The hose or swivel horn on a 2kg CO ² extinguisher is sealed with an O ring. BS5306 part 3:2009 requires that this is replaced every time the hose or horn is removed. This is normally a chargeable routine service part.
Hydraulic Test	Refer to Overhaul.
ID sign	This is hung above the extinguisher and identifies the Class of fire the extinguisher can be safely used on, protecting the user. It also provides an indication of when an extinguisher has gone missing. These are recommended to be fitted in the Health & Safety Signs & Signals Regulations.
Non maintained	An extinguisher that is unable to be serviced often due to being able to source parts economically for discontinued models.
Overhaul	CO ² extinguishers are high pressure and must undergo a hydraulic test at TEN year intervals. This is rarely cost effective these days and instead these extinguishers tend to be replaced with new. This used to be termed a 'hydraulic', 'pressure' or 'stretch' test and the term is still used in the trade as it actually describes the work being carried out.
Pressure Test	Refer to Overhaul
Responsible Disposal	Extinguisher companies have to demonstrate to the Environment Agency that they are disposing of extinguishers and their contents in an approved manner therefore a cost is levied as in the motor industry with old tyres and engine oil disposal.
Service Exchange	It is not economically or environmentally viable to conduct five yearly Extended Servicing at a customer's site on dry powder extinguishers. If the extinguisher is suitable for refilling/reconditioning the servicing company will usually exchange the extinguisher with a previously refilled/reconditioned extinguisher.
Stored Pressure	An extinguisher that is permanently pressurised – usually identifiable by a pressure indicating device on the valve.
Stretch Test	Refer to Overhaul
Tamper Seal	It is a requirement in BS5306 part 3:2009 to check the pin and to do this the plastic tamper seal needs to be broken and replaced. With 'frangible' plastic pins the whole pin is usually replaced as the OK indicator cannot be replaced on the old pin. This is normally a chargeable routine service part.
Test Discharge and Refill	Refer to Extended Service.
UV Degradation	Some makes of extinguisher use plastic for the valve body and it has long been the norm to replace these at TEN year intervals due to the plastic aging through oxidation and exposure to daylight. A proposed new amendment to BS5306 part 3:2009 will require all plastic headcaps to be replaced at FIVE yearly intervals.
Wall hanging	According to BS5306 part 8:2000 extinguishers weighing more than 4kg should be wall hung at approximately 1 metre from floor to carrying handle, extinguishers weighing less than 4kg can be hung at 1.5 metres. Alternatively extinguishers can be stood on stands.

This is the information that is typically recorded on an extinguisher service label

Next Service Due	This records the date of when the extinguisher next needs to be serviced and is only required to be added to labels on extinguishers used on heavy goods vehicles.
Inspection	Interim inspection of the extinguisher carried out at the customers request by the Service Technician. This might sometimes describe the annual 'servicing' of a fire blanket.
Basic Service	This is the service carried out at every 12 months by the Competent Person.
Extended Service	This is the 5 year test discharge and refill of stored pressure and gas cartridge extinguishers (excludes primary sealed and CO ² extinguishers).
Overhaul	The ten year hydraulic/pressure/stretch testing of CO ² extinguishers.
Weight	The total weight of the extinguisher at the end of the service.
Service date	Month and year the service work was carried out.
Technician ID	The technicians own initials, ID number or other reference.
ID number	Unique 'asset' or 'walk' number given to the extinguisher – only used if requested by the customer or on large sites.

Note that it is not acceptable to only use a bar code to record extinguisher maintenance work, this must be accompanied with a written maintenance label.

If you need further information contact Alan Palmer Secretary at the UKFA on 01932 252306 or email admin@uk-fa.org.

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