

## RECHARGEABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS INSPECTION

Here is my two cents worth.

The NFPA regs say annual tags for fixed and rechargeable, but our manuals do not specify annual. So, I have been applying a common sense and safety sense standard.

The one time use/non rechargeable portables are easy ... they either pass or fail. No tag of any kind required.

The fixed systems, and any portable that is rechargeable is supposed to have a service tag, unless it is new (less than one year old).

There are three dates to keep in mind.

1. All rechargeable (fixed and hand held) are supposed to have an annual inspection/tag.
2. Every six years, the valve assembly on these systems need to be removed and inspected. This is when the inspector "collars" the device with a round tag .. it can't be applied unless they took the top valve off.
3. Every 12 years, any rechargeable device needs to have the cylinder hydrostatic tested. (Like a scuba tank).

The common sense/safety standard I have used is to not be hard and fast on the annual tag, but I definitely do require they have the 6/12 year inspections. Many fixed systems we see in engine rooms came new with the boat, and have never been serviced. These are the ones I am hard on ... if a fixed system in a gasoline engine boat was installed 15 years ago and never inspected .. it needs to be, period. I don't care if the gauge is in the green.

If, on the other hand, the boat is less than six years old, or an inspection tag shows a six year inspection .. then I usually let the annual requirement slide.

Important for VE's to know, unlike expired flares which are fine to keep onboard, any fire extinguisher out of service needs to be off the boat.

Cheers,  
Chris