



◦ COMPLIANCE REFERENCE • EDITION 2026.1

The Texas Fire Extinguisher Compliance Guide

WRITTEN FOR
FACILITIES & PROPERTY MANAGERS
RESTAURANT OPERATORS
SAFETY & RISK OFFICERS

ISSUED BY
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◦ WHY THIS EXISTS

Most findings at a fire inspection are not equipment failures. They are paperwork failures: a tag that expired four months ago, a monthly check nobody initialed, a unit that was moved during a remodel and never remounted at the right height.

This guide is written to be read once and then kept as a reference. Every requirement is cited to the rule or standard it comes from, so you can verify any of it.

SCOPE AND LIMITS

This is a plain-English summary, not legal advice. Your local fire marshal is the authority having jurisdiction and can enforce requirements stricter than the state minimum. Verify anything that affects a compliance decision with your AHJ or with the standard itself.

CURRENT AS OF

[PUBLICATION DATE]

NFPA 10-2018 as adopted by Texas
28 TAC §34.507, eff. 09/01/2023

SECTION 01

Who regulates this in Texas

Three layers apply to almost every commercial building in the state. They overlap, and each one can generate a finding on its own.



LAYER 01

LICENSING

State licensing

The Texas Department of Insurance, through the State Fire Marshal's Office, regulates every company and individual that sells, installs, or services portable extinguishers and fixed extinguisher systems.

TEX. INS. CODE CH. 6001
28 TAC CH. 34, SUBCH. E



LAYER 02

STANDARDS

Technical standards

Texas adopts the NFPA standards by reference. The current adopted edition for portable extinguishers is NFPA 10-2018. Commercial cooking protection runs on NFPA 17-2021, 17A-2021, and 96-2021.

28 TAC §34.507
EFF. SEPTEMBER 1, 2023



LAYER 03

WORKPLACE

OSHA

If you have employees, the federal workplace standard applies on top of the state rules. It largely mirrors NFPA 10 but adds an annual training requirement that most facilities miss.

29 CFR 1910.157
SEE SECTION 09

THE FOURTH LAYER, AND THE ONE THAT DECIDES

Your city or county fire marshal is the **authority having jurisdiction**, referred to throughout this guide as the AHJ. They inspect, they cite, and they can impose requirements beyond the state floor. When this guide and your AHJ disagree, your AHJ wins.

What "adopted by reference" means

Texas does not rewrite the NFPA standards into state law. It names a specific edition and gives it legal force. That has a practical consequence: the edition Texas enforces is not always the newest edition NFPA publishes. As of this printing, Texas enforces the 2018 edition of NFPA 10, not the current one.

Why the distinction matters to you

If a vendor cites a requirement from a newer edition that Texas has not adopted, it is not enforceable here. If they cite an older edition, they are behind. Ask which edition a recommendation comes from when the answer costs money.

SECTION 02

Verify that your service company is licensed

This is the fastest check you can run, and it is the one most buildings skip.

In Texas, licenses are issued to **individuals** and registrations are issued to **companies**. Both are required. A technician holding a valid license cannot legally service your extinguishers unless they are employed by a registered firm, and a firm cannot operate without at least one licensed employee.

Company registrations

REGISTRATION	WHAT IT AUTHORIZES
Extinguisher Certificate of Registration (ECR)	The firm may do extinguisher work. Scope depends on which licenses its employees hold. Requires a Certificate of Liability Insurance for bodily injury and property damage.
ECR— Branch Office	Required separately for each additional office location doing the same work.
Type C Hydrostatic Testing Registration	Required to hydrostatically test DOT specification cylinders. Also requires a Recertification Identification Number from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Individual licenses

LICENSE	WHAT THE TECHNICIAN MAY DO
Type PL— Planning	Plan, install, certify, or service all fixed systems including engineered systems. Also portables.
Type A— Fixed Systems	Install, certify, and service all pre-engineered fixed systems, plus portables. Requires six months as a Type B or apprentice first.
Type K— Kitchen Systems	Install, certify, and service pre-engineered systems protecting cooking areas, plus portables. Requires six months as a Type B or apprentice first.
Type B— Portables	Install, certify, and service portable extinguishers, and test non-DOT specification cylinders.
Apprentice Permit	May do the work only under the direct visual supervision of a licensee, who signs the tag.

LOOK UP ANY VENDOR, INCLUDING US

The State Fire Marshal's Office publishes a public company and licensee search. Check any vendor before you sign. It takes about a minute.

appscenter.tdi.texas.gov/reports/p/sfmo

If your building has a commercial kitchen hood system, a **Type B** technician cannot legally service it. That work requires Type K, Type A, or Type PL. Ask which license the technician on your site actually holds. It is

SECTION 03

The service schedule

Four intervals govern portable fire extinguishers. Three of them require a licensed technician. One does not, and it is the one that generates the most findings.



YOUR STAFF

30 DAYS**Visual inspection**

In place, unobstructed, gauge in the green, pin and seal intact, no damage or corrosion, label legible, feels full.

J	F	M	A	M	J
J	A	S	O	N	D

NFPA 10 §7.2



LICENSED TECHNICIAN

12 MONTHS**Maintenance and tag**

Hands-on examination of mechanical parts, agent, and expelling means. A new service tag is attached. This is the interval a fire marshal checks first.

NFPA 10 §7.3
28 TAC §34.517,
§34.520



LICENSED TECHNICIAN

6 YEARS**Internal examination**

Stored-pressure dry chemical units are emptied, opened, and examined for corrosion and agent caking. Valve stem seal and O-ring replaced, unit recharged and labeled.

NFPA 10 §7.3.3
TABLE 7.3.3.1



LICENSED TECHNICIAN

12 YEARS**Hydrostatic test**

The cylinder is filled with water and pressurized to verify it still holds operating pressure. A cylinder that fails is destroyed, not repaired.

NFPA 10 §8.3
TABLE 8.3.1

Records count as much as the work

NFPA 10 §7.2.4 requires that monthly inspection records be kept, and at least twelve consecutive months should be available on request. A paper tag initialed and dated on the back is the traditional method. An electronic log is acceptable and far easier to produce during an inspection.

The monthly check is the only interval you can perform yourself. It is also the one most often done and never recorded, which reads to an inspector exactly the same as never done at all.

Why 6-year and 12-year work cannot be batched

Annual maintenance can be scheduled site-wide on one visit. The six-year and twelve-year intervals cannot. They run from each individual cylinder's date of manufacture, so in a set of forty units the due dates are scattered across the calendar.

This is why a single unit in a large inventory quietly goes overdue. It is the fourth most common finding we see, and the easiest one to prevent with an accurate inventory.

SECTION 03 • CONTINUED

Intervals by extinguisher type

Not every unit runs on the twelve-year cycle. Mixed inventories are where schedules go wrong.

Hydrostatic test intervals

EXTINGUISHER TYPE	INTERVAL
Stored-pressure dry chemical (the standard ABC unit)	12 YEARS
Halogenated agent	12 YEARS
Dry chemical, cartridge-operated (chemical cylinder)	12 YEARS
Carbon dioxide	5 YEARS
Pressurized water and water mist	5 YEARS
AFFF and FFFPfoam	5 YEARS
Wet chemical (Class K)	5 YEARS

Internal examination intervals

EXTINGUISHER TYPE	INTERVAL
Stored-pressure dry chemical, stored-pressure water	6 YEARS
Water, water mist, CO ₂ , wet chemical, stainless dry chemical	5 YEARS
AFFF and FFFPfoam	3 YEARS
Cartridge-operated, stored-pressure loaded stream, antifreeze	ANNUAL

ONE CORRECTION WORTH MAKING

A stored-pressure ABC dry chemical unit is on a **twelve-year** hydrostatic cycle, not five. The five-year interval applies to CO₂, water-based, and wet chemical units. If a vendor is pulling your dry chemical units for hydrostatic testing at year five, ask why in writing.

NON-RECHARGEABLE UNITS

Non-rechargeable extinguishers are a separate case. They are not tested at twelve years. They are removed from service twelve years from the date of manufacture. Look for markings such as "non-rechargeable" or "discharge and dispose of after any use." These units are common in small retail and light commercial spaces and are frequently left hanging well past their date.

SECTION 04

What you can do yourself, and what you cannot

Anything that involves opening, discharging, remounting, or certifying an extinguisher is licensed work in Texas. There is no exemption for maintenance staff, and none for doing it on your own property.

TASK	YOUR STAFF	LICENSED TECHNICIAN
Monthly visual inspection	YES	not required
Keeping monthly inspection records	YES	not required
Clearing obstructions from in front of a unit	YES	not required
Employee extinguisher training	YES	not required
Annual maintenance and tagging	no	REQUIRED
Recharging after any use	no	REQUIRED
Six-year internal examination	no	REQUIRED
Hydrostatic testing	no	REQUIRED
Mounting or relocating a unit	no	REQUIRED
Servicing a kitchen hood suppression system	no	TYPE K / A / PL
Removing a service tag	no	SEE SECTION 06

THE ONE THAT SURPRISES PEOPLE

Remounting counts. If a unit comes off the wall during a build-out and your maintenance team puts it back, that is licensed work performed by an unlicensed person, and the mounting height is usually wrong afterward.

THE ONE THAT SAVES MONEY

The monthly inspection is genuinely yours to do. Paying a vendor for twelve visits a year to look at a gauge is not a compliance requirement. Train one person, give them a route and a log, and spend the budget on accurate interval tracking instead.

SECTION 05

How to read your service tag

Texas specifies exactly what a service tag must contain. Knowing the ten required fields lets you spot an incomplete or fraudulent tag in about five seconds.

1 DO NOT REMOVE
BY ORDER OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

2 HAMILTON FIRE PROTECTION LLC
[STREET ADDRESS] • [PHONE]

3 CERT. OF REG. NO.
[ECR NO.]

4 LICENSEE / LICENSE NO.
B. HAMILTON • [FEL NO.]

5 SIGNATURE
B. Hamilton

6 MONTH / YEAR (PUNCHED)

J	F	M	A	M	J
J	A	S	O	N	D
25	26	27	28	29	

7

8 TYPE OF WORK (PUNCHED)

ANN	RCHG	6 YR	HYDRO
-----	------	------	-------

9

10 SERVICE PERFORMED
Annual maintenance. Gauge, pin, seal, hose, and agent verified. No deficiencies.

OWNER OR OCCUPANT
Name and address of the building owner or occupant

TYPE / SIZE / LOCATION
ABC dry chem • 10 lb • Corridor B, north exit

REQUIRED ON EVERY SERVICE TAG • 28 TAC §34.520(C)

- 1 The phrase **DO NOT REMOVE BY ORDER OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL**, in capitals, at least 10-point boldface.
- 2 The firm's name, address, and telephone number.
- 3 The firm's **certificate of registration number**. A tag without this is not a compliant tag.
- 4 The licensee's name and **license number**. This tells you which license type performed the work.
- 5 The licensee's signature, handwritten. **A stamped signature is prohibited.**
- 6 Month and year, punched.
- 7 Type of work, punched.
- 8 The service performed.
- 9 Name and address of the owner or occupant.
- 10 Extinguisher type, size, and location.

Physical requirements

Tags must be 5-1/4 inches tall and 2-5/8 inches wide, and **must not be red**. A tag may carry up to five years of punch positions. Adhesive label tags are permitted where paper tags get destroyed, but they must carry all ten fields.

WHAT A BAD TAG LOOKS LIKE

No registration number. No license number. A stamped or printed signature instead of a handwritten one. A month punched with no year. A firm name with no address or phone. Any one of these means the tag fails the state requirement, and an AHJ can treat the unit as unserviced.

SECTION 06

Red tags and yellow tags

A red tag is not a sales tactic. It is a reportable event with a paper trail on both sides, and the clock starts the moment the technician finds the problem.

What happens when a red tag goes on

If a technician finds impairments that make an extinguisher or fixed system unsafe or inoperable, the equipment goes out of service until the problem is corrected. Under 28 TAC §34.521, the registered firm owes the following notifications.

IMMEDIATELY	The owner or the owner's representative is notified. Not at the end of the visit. Not in the invoice.
24 HOURS	The local AHJ is notified by phone, fax, or email, describing the impairments or deficiencies.
3 BUS. DAYS	A copy of the written notice to the owner is submitted to the AHJ.
ON REPAIR	A service tag may go back on only after the impairment is corrected, or the unit is replaced and re-inspected and found in good operating condition.
5 BUS. DAYS	The AHJ is notified that the correction was made and the red tag removed or revised.

Yellow tags

In the extinguisher context, a yellow tag applies mainly to pre-engineered cooking system protection that does not meet UL 300. The system is not impaired, but it is out of compliance and needs to be brought current. See Section 08.

Who may remove a tag

Only an authorized employee of a registered firm, an employee of the State Fire Marshal's Office, or an authorized representative of a government agency with regulatory authority. Building staff removing tags is itself a finding.

HOW TO USE THIS AGAINST A BAD VENDOR

A firm that red-tags equipment to force a sale has to file that red tag with your fire marshal within 24 hours and produce written notice within three business days. Ask for a copy of what they sent the AHJ. A firm inventing impairments will not have sent anything, because sending it creates a record with their license number on it.

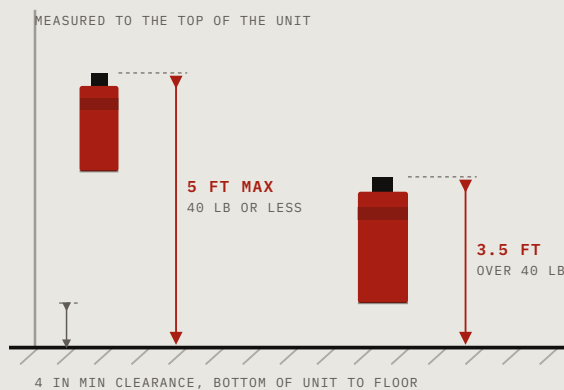
Red tags are also how a legitimate deficiency gets documented in your favor. If a unit fails because of a building condition rather than neglect, the written notice is the record that establishes when the condition was found and who was told.

SECTION 07

Placement, mounting, and access

These rules quietly go out of compliance during a remodel, a rack reconfiguration, or a tenant move-in. Nobody touches the extinguisher. The building changes around it.

MOUNTING HEIGHT • NFPA 10 §6.1.3.8



Measured to the **top** of the unit. Wheeled units are excepted from the 3.5 ft rule. The bottom of any unit must clear the floor by at least 4 inches to prevent corrosion.

CORRECTION WORTH NOTING

The threshold is **40 lb or less**, not "under 40 lb." A unit at exactly 40 lb gross weight falls under the 5 ft rule.

MAXIMUM TRAVEL DISTANCE • NFPA 10 §6.2 AND FOLLOWING

HAZARD CLASS	MAXIMUM
Class A Ordinary combustibles	75 FT
Class B Flammable liquids	30 – 50 FT
Class C Energized electrical	PER UNDERLYING A OR B HAZARD
Class D Combustible metals	75 FT
Class K Cooking media	30 FT

Class B varies between 30 and 50 feet depending on hazard level and the extinguisher's rating.

TRAVEL DISTANCE IS WALKING DISTANCE

It is measured along the path a person actually walks, around walls, racking, and equipment, and through doorways. It is not a straight line on a floor plan. This is the single most common reason a building that was compliant three years ago is not compliant today.

Access

Extinguishers must be conspicuously located, visible, and unobstructed along normal paths of travel, including exits. Pallets stacked in front of a unit is a finding. So is a unit hidden behind a rolling cart that has lived in the same spot for a year, and so is signage that fell off and was never replaced. If a visitor could not find the extinguisher in ten seconds without being told where it is, an inspector will have the same problem.

SECTION 08

Commercial kitchens

If you cook with grease-laden vapors, you are managing two separate compliance obligations that are constantly confused with each other.



OBLIGATION 01

6 MONTHS

The fixed system

NFPA 96 requires an automatic extinguishing system over appliances producing grease-laden vapors. NFPA 17A governs how it is designed, installed, inspected, and maintained: service at least every six months and after any activation.

NFPA 96-2021 • NFPA 17A-2021



OBLIGATION 02

30 FT

The Class K portable

A working hood system does not remove the requirement for a listed Class K wet chemical portable within 30 feet of the cooking hazard. The portable covers what the fixed system cannot.

NFPA 10 §6.6



THRESHOLD

UL 300

System listing

Pre-engineered systems protecting cooking areas installed or modified after July 1, 1996 must meet UL 300. Since January 1, 2008, existing systems must meet UL 300 or carry a yellow tag.

28 TAC §34.517(f)

FUSIBLE LINKS ARE REPLACED, NOT INSPECTED

Under NFPA 17A, fixed temperature sensing elements of the fusible metal alloy type must be **replaced** at least semiannually from the date of installation, and destroyed when removed. Grease coating raises a link's effective activation temperature, so a coated link may not trigger the system at all. A service report that says the links were inspected and left in place does not meet the standard.

HOOD CLEANING IS NOT SUPPRESSION SERVICE

They are different trades, different credentials, and different compliance events. A crew wiping down ductwork does not satisfy the NFPA 17A semiannual requirement, and a hood cleaning invoice will not satisfy an inspector looking for a suppression system service tag. Verify the suppression system after any hood cleaning, because cleaning chemicals on fusible links and detection devices cause their own problems.

Why UL 300 matters in an older building

Systems predating UL 300 used dry chemical agents that do not reliably suppress fires in modern high-efficiency fryers, which hold more oil at higher temperatures than the equipment those systems were tested against. If your kitchen has never had a system replacement and the building is older, this is worth checking now rather than discovering it at your next inspection or, worse, during a fire when your carrier asks for maintenance records.

A Type B licensed technician cannot legally service a kitchen hood system. That work requires Type K, Type A, or Type PL.

Check the license number on the tag hanging off your system right now.

SECTION 09

OSHA obligations if you have employees

29 CFR 1910.157 applies to workplaces where extinguishers are provided for employee use. It overlaps heavily with NFPA 10, with one requirement that gets missed more than any other.

REQUIREMENT	CITATION
Mounted, located, and identified so they are readily accessible without subjecting employees to injury	§1910.157(c)(1)
Monthly visual inspection	§1910.157(e)(2)
Annual maintenance check, date recorded, record retained for one year after the last entry or the life of the shell, whichever is less	§1910.157(e)(3)
Employee training on extinguisher use and the hazards of early-stage firefighting, on initial assignment and at least annually thereafter	§1910.157(g)(1)–(2)

THE ONE THAT SURPRISES PEOPLE

The annual training requirement is not satisfied by having compliant equipment. If your employees are expected to use an extinguisher, they need documented training when they start and every year after. Most facilities can produce service tags and cannot produce training records.

SECTION 10

What you should be able to hand an inspector

Keep these in one place, digital or physical, and your inspection gets short.

- ☐ Twelve months of monthly inspection records
- ☐ Current annual service tags on every unit, complete per Section 05
- ☐ A current inventory: type, size, rating, location, manufacture date, last annual, next 6-year, next hydrostatic
- ☐ Six-year maintenance labels and hydrostatic test records for units that have reached those intervals
- ☐ Your service company's certificate of registration number and proof of liability insurance
- ☐ For kitchens: the most recent semiannual suppression service report and UL 300 documentation
- ☐ Employee extinguisher training records, if OSHA applies to you
- ☐ Any red or yellow tag notices, and the documentation showing the correction

SECTION 11

The findings we see most often

In rough order of frequency, from several hundred commercial inspections.

01 Travel distance drifted out of compliance

After a build-out, new racking, or a wall going in. Nobody moved the extinguisher. The building moved around it. Re-walk the route after any floor plan change.

02 Missing or incomplete monthly inspection records

The checks were done. Nobody wrote them down. To an inspector, undocumented and never performed look identical.

03 Blocked or obstructed units

Usually inventory, a cart, or seasonal storage. The unit is fine. The access is not.

04 Six-year or twelve-year service overdue

These intervals stagger by each cylinder's manufacture date, so they cannot be batched the way annuals can. One unit in a set of forty comes due and gets missed.

05 Wrong extinguisher class for the hazard

An ABC dry chemical unit near a fryer will not suppress a cooking oil fire. Only a Class K wet chemical unit forms the blanket that seals it.

06 Mounting height wrong after a rehang

A unit came down for painting or a build-out and went back up by whoever was holding the drill.

07 Tag missing required fields

Most often the license number, or a stamped signature where the rule requires a handwritten one.

08 Pre-UL 300 kitchen systems still in service

Common in buildings that have changed hands without a suppression system replacement.

SECTION 12

Quick reference

Tear this page out, or print it and put it inside the electrical room door.

INTERVAL	WHAT HAPPENS	WHO PERFORMS IT
EVERY 30 DAYS	Visual inspection, recorded	Your staff
EVERY 12 MONTHS	Maintenance and new service tag	Licensed technician
EVERY 6 MONTHS	Kitchen suppression service, fusible links replaced	Licensed technician, Type K / A / PL
EVERY 6 YEARS	Internal examination, stored-pressure dry chemical	Licensed technician
EVERY 5 YEARS	Internal exam and hydrostatic test: CO ₂ , water, wet chemical	Licensed technician
EVERY 12 YEARS	Hydrostatic test, stored-pressure dry chemical	Licensed technician; Type C firm for DOT cylinders
ANNUALLY	Employee extinguisher training, if OSHA applies	Your organization

FOUR NUMBERS WORTH MEMORIZING

Maximum travel distance, Class A	75 FT
Maximum travel distance, Class K	30 FT
Maximum mounting height, 40 lb or less	5 FT
Minimum floor clearance, any unit	4 IN

VERIFY ANY VENDOR

Texas State Fire Marshal's Office public company and licensee search:

[appscenter.tdi.texas.gov](https://appscenter.tdi.texas.gov/reports/p/sfmo)
/reports/p/sfmo

Confirm the firm holds a current Certificate of Registration and that the technician on your site holds the license type the work requires.

◦ SOURCES

Texas Insurance Code Chapter 6001, Fire Extinguishers.

28 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 34, Subchapter E, Fire Extinguisher Rules. Particularly §34.507 adopted standards, §34.511 license types, §34.517 installation and service, §34.520 service tags, and §34.521 red tags.

NFPA 10-2018, Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers, as adopted by Texas.

NFPA 17A-2021 and NFPA 96-2021, as adopted by Texas.

29 CFR 1910.157, OSHA portable fire extinguisher standard.

Texas Department of Insurance, State Fire Marshal's Office, licensing and registration information.

◦ DISCLAIMER

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Hamilton Fire Protection LLC

TEXAS SFMO CERT. OF REG. [ECR NO.]

LICENSED TECHNICIANS [LICENSE TYPES HELD]

[PHONE] • [EMAIL]

[SERVICE AREA]

TEXAS OWNED,
AMERICAN STRONG