

Memo-Servicing & Technical Info

From: The National Office

Date: Apr 2013

Number 83

Using and Decommissioning Fire Extinguishers

All extinguishers are operated by internal pressure and the sudden uncontrolled release of this pressure is dangerous and care must be taken to protect against this.

When using extinguishers, training others to use an extinguisher or looking to release the pressure for an extended service or de-commissioning the operator should NOT stand over the unit.

DON'T FORGET YOUR SAFETY GOGGLES

If the extinguisher head/valve blows it will, more than likely, go straight up – make sure it is the ceiling that is the first obstacle not your chin/head.

Extinguisher headcaps or valves should be fitted with a means of pressure release which is usually achieved by either vent holes in the headcap/valve or grooves cut across the headcap/valve threads BUT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THESE VENT HOLES OR GROOVES MAY BE BLOCKED.

Extinguishers operated by stored pressure must be discharged or depressurised before the headcap/valve is removed: **This may be done by inverting the extinguisher.**

Do not depressurise a cartridge operated extinguisher by depressing the handles. With the safety pin in, remove the head and then the cartridge.

Headcaps/valves must be removed slowly using the correct tool, with the extinguisher so positioned that if the headcap/valve is forced off by internal pressure it is directed away from causing injury and danger.

If pressure vents after one or two turns of the headcap/valve leave the extinguisher in a safe position until the pressure stops venting. Difficulty in unscrewing the headcap/valve may be an indication that pressure is contained within the extinguisher.

An extinguisher should be securely clamped when a valve/headcap is damaged or difficult to remove or the extinguisher body is damaged or corroded.

Irrespective of make, type and size, the servicing of extinguishers and the sequence of actions to be followed is prescribed by BS5306-3 and the manufacturers' service manuals which must be read in conjunction with this memo.

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