

Firefighting Equipment Guidelines

Fire safety is a critical aspect of church management. This guide outlines the types of firefighting equipment commonly found in our churches, their proper use, and maintenance requirements. It is essential that all staff and volunteers familiarise themselves with this information to ensure the safety of all church occupants in the event of a fire.

Types of Fire-Fighting Equipment

In churches, the most common types of fire-fighting equipment are:

1. Portable fire extinguishers
2. Fixed hose reels
3. Fire hoses and hydrants
4. Sprinkler systems
5. Fire blankets

1. Portable Fire Extinguishers

Portable fire extinguishers are the most versatile and commonly used firefighting equipment. Different types of extinguishers are designed for different types of fires.

Type of extinguisher	Colour	Type of Fire
Water	Solid Red	Wood, Textile, Paper, Cloth
Foam	Red with blue band	Fat, Petrol, Oil
Carbon Dioxide	Red with black band	Live Electricity, Motor Vehicles
Dry Chemical Powder	Red with white band	Fat, Petrol, Oil, Live Electricity, Motor Vehicles

Important Notes:

- Water and Foam extinguishers are dangerous if used on electrical fires.
- Carbon Dioxide extinguishers are not specially suitable outdoors.
- Vaporising Liquid extinguishers containing BCF or Halon are no longer permitted. Contact the supplier for proper disposal.

2. Fixed Hose Reels

- Wall-mounted in accessible locations or in a cabinet
- Connected to a constant water supply
- Suitable for fires involving ordinary combustibles (wood, paper, rubbish, textiles)
- Must NOT be used on live electrical equipment

3. Fire Hoses and Hydrants

- For use only by the fire authority or a qualified fire-fighting team
- Unqualified people must not use them

4. Sprinkler Systems

- Designed to detect, control, and/or extinguish fires
- Sprinkler heads are activated by heat
- Automatically alert the fire authority when activated
- Require a maintenance contract and regular testing

5. Fire Blankets

- Suitable for small fires in pans, trays, etc.
- Ideal for use in kitchens for fat fires
- Can be used to suppress flames on a person whose clothing has caught fire
- Work by depriving the fire of oxygen

Maintenance and Testing

- All firefighting equipment must be regularly checked and maintained.

- It is recommended to outsource maintenance to professionals to ensure equipment is in good working order.
- Keep detailed records of all maintenance activities.
- Check local regulations for specific maintenance requirements, as they may vary by state/territory.

Training and Familiarisation

- All employees and voluntary workers should familiarise themselves with the location and proper use of fire extinguishers.
- Consider providing basic training for staff and volunteers, potentially through the local fire authority.
- Identify any congregation members with fire warden training who can assist the church with their expertise.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a fire:

1. Ensuring people's safety is the first priority.
2. Only attempt to extinguish a fire if it is safe to do so and you are trained in the use of firefighting equipment.
3. Follow the church's established evacuation procedures.
4. Call emergency services (000) immediately.

Additional Considerations

- Ensure clear signage indicating the location of firefighting equipment.
- Keep areas around fire fighting equipment clear and easily accessible.
- Include fire safety information in new staff and volunteer inductions.
- Conduct regular fire drills to ensure all occupants are familiar with evacuation procedures.

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