



SAFETY ALERT # 29



November 16, 2007

In the interest of keeping everyone safe CAMSAFETY will be sharing injury information with preliminary root cause analysis. This information is intended to make you think not assess blame. If you have an incident that you would like to share send us the information and we will pass it along.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER CATASTROPHIC FAILURE

What Happened

A fatal injury occurred resulting from the operation of a gas cartridge type dry chemical powder filled fire extinguisher. Upon activating the fire extinguisher, the bottom of the extinguisher body failed. The fire extinguisher propelled upwards and struck the fire extinguisher operator in the neck and chin area resulting in fatal injuries. There were signs of corrosion on the base of the extinguisher - it is thought that this may have contributed to the fire extinguisher failure. As a precautionary measure it is advised that all cartridge type fire extinguishers (in simple terms those which do not have a pressure gauge attached) should be inspected immediately. Those which show signs of significant corrosion or severe pitting should be removed from service and replaced.



Prevention:

Visually inspect all gas cartridge operated fire extinguishers that are located in potentially corrosive environments. Please check for signs of significant corrosion or severe pitting on the body and base of the fire extinguisher. Where there is a sign of corrosion or severe pitting on the extinguisher, take the extinguisher out of service immediately and replace it with a new unit.

During inspection, accessories such as rubber bases or mounting brackets should be removed to ensure a complete visual examination of the unit. If you are in doubt to the severity of the corrosion, take the extinguisher out of service and have it tested in line with manufacturer's guidelines. Potentially corrosive environments include:

- fire extinguishers stored outside, unprotected from the weather
- fire extinguishers stored in wet or damp environments, or in potential standing water
- fire extinguishers stored near marine environments, jetties, platforms, shipping any facility located near salt water
- fire extinguishers stored on or near chemical processing facilities