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Department of Employment and Labour Approved Inspection Authority (OH0049-CI-09)



OH0049



PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS




Fire Safety : A Burning Topic

The South African National Building Regulations & Building Standards Act is essentially concerned with how buildings are designed and constructed to ensure that they are healthy and safe environments to work in. However, the Act is not a handbook on good building practice. **SANS Codes** (South African National Standards), developed by the SABS, guide and regulate compliance with the Act.



#1 PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Portable Fire Fighting Equipment Must Be:

-  easily accessible
-  clearly visible and marked with symbolic signs
-  maintained and in good working order

The **SANS 1910** specification provides clear requirements and specifications with regard to the **design and manufacture** of fire extinguishers.

SANS 1475-1 and **SANS 10105-1** covers installation, maintenance and servicing of equipment by competent persons. Extinguishers, fire hose reels and above-ground hydrants must be checked annually - with the additional requirement that powder, foam, water and water based extinguishers be pressure tested every 5 years and CO2 extinguishers every 10 years.

Fire equipment that does not bear the manufacturing mark of an accredited certification body and comply with SANS 1910 and PER (Pressure Equipment Regulations) cannot be serviced and must be condemned by the service company.

#2 FIRE SAFETY PERSONNEL

Having the correct number of firefighters available to deal with an emergency is crucial in the case of a fire on site - however, there is no definite number of firefighters a company needs. This can only be determined by the type of hazards a company faces, as well as the number of staff within the company. It is, however, good practice within large companies to have a firefighter per department, should anything go wrong.

Knowing which equipment to use and how to use it is essential. But it is also just as important to ensure that all employees are adequately trained and know what to do in the case of a fire.

ARE YOU COVERED?

Step 1: calculate floor size in square metres.

Step 2: check SANS 10400 Part A to verify the Class of Occupancy of Buildings for your particular site

Step 3: check SANS 10400: Part T, Table 11, for guidance on the number of fire extinguishers needed for the specified occupancy class.

How to calculate if you have enough portable fire extinguishers on site

Be equipped with the most up-to-date edition of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations as we kick-start the year in the workplace

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY

Reg 4 of the OHS Act General Administrative Regulations states that:

"Every employer with **five or more persons** in his employ shall have a copy of the Act and the relevant regulations readily available at the workplace: Provided that where the total number of employees is less than five, the employer shall, on request of the employee, make a copy of the Act available to that employee"

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Heat stress is the combined effect of a work environment with high temperatures and the demands of the task being performed. It occurs as a result of heat from the environment being absorbed faster than the body can get rid of it.

The body's temperature regulating mechanism is affected due to this heat load, and resulting heat disorders may occur. The risk of heat stress is increased by any process or job that raises the body's core temperature.

Managing the effects of temperature depends on the following factors:

- whether the workplace is indoors or outdoors
- the normal operating temperature of that environment



WORKING INDOORS

- Provide fans, such as desk, pedestal or ceiling-mounted ones.
- Provide air-cooling or air-conditioning and adequate ventilation.
- Ensure windows can be opened to keep air circulating.
- Shade employees from direct sunlight with blinds or by using reflective film on windows.
- Position workstations away from direct sunlight or heat sources.
- Place insulating materials around hot equipment and pipes.
- Introduce flexible working patterns, such as job rotation or moving workers to cooler parts of the building where possible.
- Provide cold water dispensers and allow enough breaks to allow workers to get cold drinks or cool down.
- Relax formal dress codes – but make sure personal protective equipment is used if required.

Risks caused by weather can have a serious impact on worker health if they are not properly managed.

REDUCING RISKS

→ **MONITOR**

workplace temperatures to establish how they are affecting workers

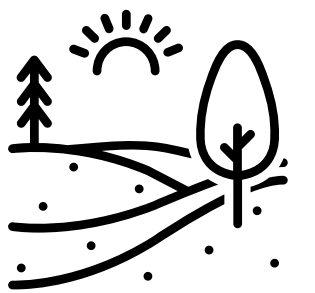
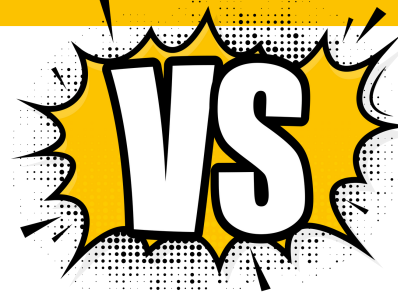
→ **SCREEN**

workers who are pregnant / have illnesses or disabilities / are taking certain medication (may include medical surveillance)

→ **REVIEW**

working habits and current practices and change these, where necessary, to control the risks

ACTIONS TO TAKE TO PROTECT PEOPLE



WORKING OUTDOORS

- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day.
- Provide more frequent breaks and introduce shading to rest and working areas.
- Provide free access to cool drinking water.
- Encourage workers to remove personal protective equipment **when resting**, to help encourage heat loss.
- Ensure that workers can recognise the early symptoms of heat stress.

Too much sunlight can cause skin damage including sunburn, blistering, skin ageing and may also lead to an increased risk of skin cancer.

HELP!
IS AT HAND

WHEN ARE OUR SURVEYS DUE?

DO WE NEED TO HAVE THEM REDONE?

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#2 SELECT THE DOWNLOAD TAB ON THE HOMEPAGE

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