

Clarification of the 12 Year Rule for Fire Extinguishers in VE Inspections

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There has been confusion surrounding the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA10 provision dealing with the 12 year fire extinguisher expiration requirement) and the Vessel Safety Check.

The information in the Vessel Safety Check Manual COMDTINST M16796.8A regarding fire extinguisher inspection is the current, most accurate guidance. This information is the only reference that should be used by Vessel Examiners conducting Vessel Safety Checks, and providing instruction.

Vessel Examiners may encounter some fire extinguishers that have a 12 year expiration date on the device during a Vessel Safety Check. Extinguishers found beyond this 12 year date should not be considered unserviceable, and should not fail a Vessel Safety Check because of this fact. These extinguishers should be inspected to ensure they are Coast Guard approved, and in compliance with the manual in terms of serviceability.

Further details may be found at: <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=V-DEPT&category=dir-v-says>