



June 24 — The Time to Find Out

Found fire extinguisher that wasn't charged.	Place it above portable fire extinguisher storage in fire suppression room to be replaced.
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There are some tools you hope you never have to use.

Fire extinguishers are one of them.

But if the day comes when you need one, it has to work.

During a routine observation, an employee discovered a fire extinguisher that was not charged. Recognizing that the extinguisher would not provide the protection employees expected in an emergency, it was immediately removed from service and placed in the designated fire suppression area for replacement.

At first glance, an uncharged fire extinguisher may not seem like an urgent issue. The extinguisher is mounted on the wall. The area appears protected. Work continues as normal.

The problem is that safety equipment creates a sense of confidence. When employees see a fire extinguisher, eyewash station, emergency stop, or other protective device, they naturally assume it will function when needed. That assumption can become dangerous if inspections are skipped or equipment conditions change over time.

Most emergencies don't provide a warning. When a fire starts, there isn't time to discover the extinguisher has lost pressure, is damaged, or is missing altogether. The time to identify those problems is long before the emergency occurs.

In this case, the employee didn't walk past the extinguisher or assume someone else would notice it. A simple inspection led to a correction that ensured the equipment would be ready when needed.

That's exactly how safety systems are meant to work.

Hazards

- Inoperable emergency equipment
- Delayed fire response
- Increased fire damage
- Potential injury during an emergency
- False sense of security
- Inadequate emergency preparedness

Words of Wisdom

Emergency equipment isn't important because of how often it's used. It's important because of what happens when it doesn't work. Regular inspections help ensure safety equipment is ready before an emergency occurs.

Pause and Think

- How often do you inspect emergency equipment in your work area?
- What other safety equipment could create a false sense of security if it isn't maintained properly?
- Why is it easy to overlook equipment that is rarely used?
- What should you do if you discover damaged or inoperable emergency equipment?
- What could happen if an employee reached for this extinguisher during a fire?

Closing Thought

The worst time to discover safety equipment doesn't work is the moment you need it.