

A p a r t m e n t

SAFETY NOTES

SPOKANE FIRE DEPARTMENT

JULY 2011

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS: FACTS & SCAMS



A concerned business owner in Spokane recently alerted the Spokane Fire Prevention Division regarding a questionable transaction involving the servicing of his fire extinguishers.

A local business owner had been contacted just before closing time a few days prior to the incident by someone claiming that he was there to provide the “annual service” for his fire extinguishers. When the service person returned a few days later to complete the job, the owner witnessed two men working from the back of a white truck. The men simply shook a couple of their own extinguishers, spilled some white powder on the street, replaced the tag on his extinguisher with one that had “Fire Safety Services” printed on it, and presented the owner with a bill.

Multi-family apartment owners and managers need to be aware of the following:

- (1) At least one **2A:10BC** rated fire extinguisher must be placed within a 75’ travel distance of any location in the building.
- (2) Extinguishers must be inspected monthly with a record indicating the date, initials of person doing this internal inspection and any corrective actions taken.
- (3) **Extinguishers must have a current annual service tag that is completed by one of the 12 Companies registered with Spokane Fire Department.**

The following are the twelve (12) Portable Extinguishing Service companies currently registered with the Spokane Fire Department: A 1 Fire Control, ABC Fire Control Inc, Fire Protection Specialists, Fire Systems West Inc, Firepower Inc, General Fire Equipment, Inland Fire Extinguisher Service & Sales, Landlocked Divers, Oxarc, Sears Fire Extinguisher, Simplex Grinnell Fire Protection, and Valley Fire & Safety Service. For further information on these companies, check the Yellow Pages of your phone directory or Spokane Fire Prevention Division at 625-7000. For the business record of other fire extinguisher servicers, contact the Better Business Bureau for Eastern WA at www.bbb.org.

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Make sure that your managers recognize the name of your servicer company and that they are alert to the possibility scam operators are posing as legitimate providers in our area. Businesses also have the right to dispute bills that were performed under false pretenses.



Summer evenings under the stars may inspire tenants to create some camping ambience with portable fire pits or chimineas.

If such devices are allowed on your property, please make sure that everyone knows the precautions that accompany any use of open flame.

- * Always use portable outdoor fireplaces, barbecues or patio warmers according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- * Keep appropriate extinguishing devices handy whenever there is an open flame.
- * Only burn approved fuels: seasoned (i.e. clean and dry) firewood, briquettes, natural or propane gas.
- * Never throw vegetative waste or paper of any kind into the fire.
- * Watch to assure the flame never is higher than 2 feet or wider than 3 feet.
- * Be mindful of using these devices on any type of wooded deck or placing them too close to siding, combustible fences, or overhangs.

- * Understand that it is the tenant's responsibility to immediately stop using the device if the resulting smoke becomes an irritation to neighbors. Wood-burning devices create more smoke and toxins.
- * Keep informed regarding any type of fire ban during the hot and dry weeks of summer, particularly when there are windy conditions.

For additional information, contact www.spokanecleanair.org.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recently issued a cautionary reminder to never reignite tiki torches that have not completely cooled down. CPSC also warned of ceramic fire pots that use pourable gel fluid. Individuals in several States have sustained serious burns when the gel exploded and landed on their skin and/or clothing. Fire pots should **never** be re-lit unless they are completely cool to the touch. In case of an uncontrolled fire, consumers should use a dry chemical fire extinguisher in lieu of water to avoid fire spread. In addition to preventing burns, it is important to keep all gel fluid out of the reach of children or pets because it is poisonous to drink.

Consumers should be aware that 460,000 bottles and jugs of NAPAfire and FIREGEL were recalled June 22nd. This product has been sold since December 2009 for amounts ranging between \$5 and \$78. Consumers should immediately stop using that specific brand and return the product to their retailer for a full refund. See www.cpsc.gov for additional information.

You can sign up for this monthly newsletter, ask a fire-related question or suggest a specific safety topic by contacting Jan Doherty at jdoherty@spokanefire.org or by calling 625-7058.

Access this edition of Apartment Safety Notes as well as back issues at www.spokanefire.org under "Prevention".



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