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A-GRAM

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# Fire Extinguisher Update to UFC 3-600-01

## Synopsis

The latest Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) 3-600-01 Fire Protection Engineering for Facilities was published Aug 8, 2016 superseding UFC 3-600-01, Change 3 and all preceding changes dated 26 September 2006. The update to UFC 3-600-01 clarified many of the requirements in the 26 September 2006, Change 3, and further unifies the Services' requirements. This also updated requirements with current consensus standards and reorganized the document to match the organization of the IBC to make it easier for Architectural-Engineering Firms to use.

A UFC change of criteria raising questions among the Air Force community is the elimination of fire extinguishers in most facilities protected with a fire alarm and sprinkler system in accordance with NFPA 13.

## Background

### Fire extinguishers in facilities

This paradigm shift in the elimination of fire extinguishers is due to the redundancy in fire protections system features and the cost to purchase, maintain, and train personnel. Data does not justify extinguishers in facilities protected with automatic sprinkler systems and a written facility fire safety policy by the Fire Marshall which requires the immediate and total evacuation of employees from the workplace upon the sounding of a fire alarm. AFI 91-203 requires when extinguishers are provided, Fire Emergency Services (FES) Flight will manage the installation fire extinguisher program and is the authority for all matters involving fire extinguishers. This update will result in cost savings to organizations across the Air Force.

***Are fire extinguishers being removed?*** This is up to the Base Civil Engineer (BCE), installation Fire Chief, and the using organization commander.

The new UFC requirement is not a directive to remove existing extinguishers in facilities. These fire extinguishers are paid for, in place and serviceable. For new construction, fire extinguishers will not be installed if not required by the UFC. If an organization decides to reduce the operations and maintenance (O&M) budget for extinguisher training and maintenance, they have the option to work with the Fire Department to remove extinguishers if the facility is protected with a sprinkler and fire alarm system in accordance with UFC 3-600-01. This is consistent with OSHA Regulations that exempt fire extinguishers where an established and implemented fire safety policy is provided in a work place. Fire Departments may survey to determine if extinguishers are not required by Life Safety Code standards. Removing excess extinguishers through attrition at the end of their service life will reduce O&M costs.

***Does removing fire extinguishers jeopardize personnel safety?*** No, it enhances personnel safety.

Automatic sprinkler systems are extremely effective and have a proven track record of extinguishing fires in the earliest stages. If a building is protected by sprinklers, fire extinguishers may coerce you into endangering yourself by attempting to fight a fire when you should be escaping.

***What does an organization do with my units fire extinguisher once removed?*** Follow normal base procedures for fire extinguisher turn in. There is no Air Force initiative to pick up extinguishers. Facility managers should follow established procedures for extinguisher exchange when turning in an expired extinguisher.

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