

3.9 Fire Safety Equipment

3.9.1 Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are very important components of laboratory safety. Fire extinguishers are spaced and located as required by current fire codes and standards. Currently the department of Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management performs monthly inspection and performs required maintenance on all fire extinguishers at Stephen F. Austin State University.

- Only use a fire extinguisher if the fire is very small and you know how to use the extinguisher safely. If you can't put out the fire, leave immediately. Make sure you call 911 or fire department even if you think the fire is out.
- In laboratories, fire extinguishers should be securely located on the wall near an exit. The lab occupant should be aware of the condition of the fire extinguishers by observing them for broken seals, damages, low gauge pressure, or improper mounting.
- Occupants of laboratories should visually inspect lab fire extinguishers at least monthly. Units that are missing, have broken seals, low pressure or visible damage should be reported to EHSRM immediately for replacement.
- For fire extinguisher service, requests, training, or any questions call EHSRM at 468-4532.

3.9.2 Fire Alarms

Fire alarms are designed so that all endangered laboratory personnel and building occupants are alerted by an audible warning (in many buildings there is also visual warning).

- All employees/students should become familiar with the exact location of the fire alarm pull stations nearest to their laboratory.
- Sprinkler systems, smoke detectors and heat detectors may automatically activate the fire alarm. (This should not be considered a substitute for manual fire alarm activation.)
- Smoke detectors should never be tampered with and must be regularly checked for viable battery.
- In case of a fire, immediately exit the building and call 911 or Campus Police.

3.9.3 Sprinklers

Sprinklers are designed to enhance life safety by controlling a fire until the fire department arrives or, in many cases, completely extinguish the fire.

- Sprinklers are automatically activated, and laboratory workers should not attempt to shut off or tamper with the system.
- Items in the laboratory must be stored at least 18 inches below the sprinklers.
- Items (e.g., wiring or tubing etc.) must not hang from the sprinklers or sprinkler pipes.
- Sprinklers must not be painted or otherwise obstructed.
- Intense heat should not be used near sprinklers.

3.9.4 Fire Blankets

Fire blankets, for example, can provide you with extra support when you're faced with a fire situation. When you smother the flames with a fire blanket, you are extinguishing the fire because you are taking away the oxygen. When the blanket covers the fire, it pushes the oxygen away from the fire source, causing the fire to grow smaller and smaller until all of the oxygen has been removed and the fire is completely out.

Fire blankets should be checked in the same way as fire extinguishers. A test label will normally be fixed to the back of the fire blanket and the test date recorded. It is recommended that you check that the blanket has been inspected within the last year as part of your safety inspections. You should also check that a fire blanket notice is placed near the blanket. This notice gives basic guidance on how to use the blanket in an emergency. If the blanket has not been tested or is missing a notice, please report this to EHSRM at 468-6034.