



RECYCLING FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Fire extinguishers consist of a hand-held cylindrical pressure-vessel, usually made of steel or aluminum, and an agent, which can be discharged to extinguish a fire. There are two main types of fire extinguishers: stored pressure and cartridge-operated. Stored pressure fire extinguishers are the most common type and, of these, the ones that have a dry chemical as the agent are most common. The dry chemical is typically mono ammonium sulfate, sodium bicarbonate or potassium bicarbonate – all of which are considered non-toxic.

Are there any hazards to be concerned about with fire extinguishers?

The main concerns are:

- Contents are under pressure and may explode when combined with other materials.
- Very old fire extinguishers (pre 1960's) may contain carbon tetrachloride, a known carcinogen.

If you have a very old fire extinguisher and the label says it contains carbon tetrachloride, contact the Chester County Solid Waste Authority at 610-273-3771 ext. 228, for advice on what to do with the extinguisher.

If It's Empty:

- Squeeze the Lever Above the Handle: This will ensure that all contents are discharged.
- Remove the Head so that the recycler knows the container is empty.
- Recycle the Steel Body: Once the head is removed, the container can be sent to a metals recycler.

If It Is Not Empty: The casing is usually made out of steel or aluminum and can be recycled. Recyclers will not accept containers that are not empty so you have to discharge all contents first.

When emptying the container for disposal:

- Discharge outside, away from children or pets
- For safety, wear goggles and a particulate mask when discharging extinguisher
- Pull the pin on the extinguisher – this unlocks the operating lever
- Squeeze the lever above the handle to discharge contents
- Aim low and discharge contents into a bucket or another container
- After you have finished discharging the contents and nothing else comes out, remove the head from the container – this will let the recycler know that the extinguisher is empty.

Fire extinguishers can be taken to:

- Marco, Inc., 320 Commerce Drive, Exton, PA 610-363-2233 (Completely discharged please)
- East Brandywine Fire Company, 20 Bondsville Rd., Downingtown, PA
- West Whiteland Fire Department, 227 Crest Ave., Exton, PA
- Keystone Fire Protection, 433 Industrial Dr., North Wales, PA 215-641-0100

Disclaimer: This listing is provided as a public service by Chester County Solid Waste Authority. No companies are endorsed or recommended. To add listings or to make corrections, contact 610-273-3771 *226.