

# New Fire Extinguisher Regulations



Provided by Pamlico Sail & Power Squadron based in  
Washington, NC

It's important to stay updated on boating safety standards for ourselves and should you be boarded by NC Wildlife or the Coast Guard. The U.S. Coast Guard has recently issued new fire extinguisher regulations for motorized recreational boats that went into **effect April 20, 2022**. The new rules don't include changes for when and how many fire extinguishers are required on boats, based on size of the vessel. If your boat was required to carry a fire extinguisher(s), those requirements still apply.

## Major changes

The Coast Guard now uses the Underwriters Laboratory performance-based classification system for portable fire extinguishers. Most extinguishers already have Coast Guard and UL rating classifications. All approved extinguishers installed before August 22, 2016, can remain on recreational vessels as long as they are serviceable.

However, the new classification system requires portable and semi-portable extinguishers to be marked with a combined number and letter designation. The letter designates what class of fire each extinguisher is suitable for. The number indicates the extinguishing potential.

## Ratings

In addition to being onboard and readily accessible, all portable and semi-portable fire extinguishers must be "Marine Type-USCG Approved" with the correct classification. This means they must have the Coast Guard classification system marking and approval number on the label.

- Extinguishers **UL Classified 5-B:C/10-B:C** (or greater) meet carriage requirements for all recreational vessels regardless of vessel age.
- Extinguishers rated as **Marine Type USCG Type B:C, size I or size II** are only acceptable on vessels built in model year 2017 or earlier.
- Ratings that include higher numbers or more letters are acceptable.
- One 20-B extinguisher may be carried to replace two required 5-B extinguishers.
- The regulations include special rules for vessels built prior to 1952.

## **Age**

Disposable fire extinguishers cannot be older than 12 years from the date stamp on the bottle. Expired disposable extinguishers must be removed from service and taken off the boat on December 31 of their 12th year.

## **Condition**

Extinguishers must be in good, serviceable working condition, meaning

- pressure gauges or indicators, if present, must be in the operable range or position;
- lock pins must be firmly in place;
- discharge nozzles should be clean and free of obstruction; and
- extinguishers should show no visible signs of significant corrosion or damage.

For more information, on this change, reference the link below

<https://uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/fire-extinguisher-faq.php>

This article is given the courtesy of your local America's Boating Club of the Pamlico. Keep us in mind for your boating education and skill building that includes advanced courses as well as 4 hour seminars. To learn more about our boating courses, email our Education Officer at [psps@gmail.com](mailto:psps@gmail.com). We invite you to reference our website at <https://pamlicosailandpowersquadron.org> to learn more and to keep up on the education opportunities offered.