

Common Myth #23

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Just recharge the extinguisher, don't ask questions.

Description

You just received a call from a good customer to recharge fire extinguishers. Or, on the way to or from another job, your technician stops in unannounced at a good customer to see "What's up?" and finds extinguishers needing recharge. What now? Do you just recharge them and leave? You can but there may be much to learn!

By asking some questions when recharges are needed, you may find some sales opportunities, but more importantly, you may find ways to give your customer better protection and help the industry.

Your technicians, even the most shy, have some conversation at the time of the fire extinguisher recharge work mentioned in paragraph one. What you need to do is help focus the direction of their conversation and ask some specific questions that will lead to more information:

1. Did you have a Fire? (As opposed to vandalism, horseplay, or cooling a 6-pack)
2. Was anyone hurt during the incident? (Any other safety items needed?)
3. Were all the units to be recharged used on the same fire? (If yes, you're leading to the need for larger units, or more units – are spares a good idea?)
4. Was the fire extinguished by plant personnel? (Do they need more or different training?)
5. Was the fire department called? (If not, this is one of many unreported fires)
6. How (where) did the fire start? (Is there a new hazard or potential hazard that had not been noticed before?)
7. Were other units partially discharged and placed back on the wall? (That one's ok, I only used a little bit)

Did anything unusual or unexpected happen? (This can lead to what their expectations of the fire extinguishers were, and if the type of extinguisher was appropriate for the hazard, situation and environment)

Finally, if you are not reporting these things to NAFED (National Association of Fire Equipment Distributors) then you should start reporting. NAFED is attempting to capture these incidents, which often go unreported, in an effort to confirm the effectiveness of fire extinguishers in small, unreported fires. It will also demonstrate the need for both fire extinguishers and fire extinguisher maintenance.

Not a member of NAFED? Then you should think about joining.