

Common Myth #30

Posted on [March 1, 2013](#) by [Amerex](#)

You don't have to check the gas tube in cartridge-operated extinguishers during the annual maintenance

Description

You bet they do. Amerex recently issued a Tech Tip (#27) that talked about gas tubes on cartridge operated type wheeled units. Gas tubes are an important component in all cartridge-operated extinguishers, whether it is a hand portable or a wheeled unit. The gas tube consists of a metal tube with holes in it that is covered by a rubber sleeve. The purpose of the tube is to direct the pressurizing gas (nitrogen or CO₂) in several directions. This will fluidize the chemical as the unit is pressurized and break up any packed chemical. (It will break up packed chemical, not caked chemical that has been exposed to moisture.) The rubber sleeves act like a check valve allowing gas to go into the extinguisher but not allowing chemical back up into the gas tube.

If the gas tube is cracked, broken or has a defective rubber sleeve that is cut or missing, the extinguisher will not function properly or it may not function at all). Chemical may back into the tube and pack, preventing the expellant gas from pressurizing the extinguisher properly or the chemical may not be completely fluidized. NFPA 10 includes gas tube replacement in their list of corrective actions to be taken if the tube is found to be defective.

When conducting maintenance of wheeled extinguishers, always follow the manufacturer's manual. Using a wheeled unit service kit, and other tools provided by supply companies and manufacturer's, you can firm the condition of the gas tube during annual maintenance.

Amerex feels that stored pressure designs are more advanced and more reliable with fewer components and parts. We offer a full line of stored pressure, wheeled, and hand portable extinguishers that are simple to service while being extremely reliable in their performance. We make cartridge operated wheeled units at the request of our customers and their end users. Like all cartridge-operated extinguishers, they require more maintenance and more diligence in checking the various components in order to maintain optimum performance and reliability.