

# SAFETY ALERT

## Fire Extinguisher Incident

This safety bulletin is for the attention of the Emeco Group, employees, clients and contractors who have portable fire extinguishers fitted on their company vehicles and equipment fleet.

Recently Emeco Canada had serious incident with a fire extinguisher. Sharing these findings will hopefully eliminate this type of incident from reoccurring.

### INCIDENT

Sunday February 12, 2012 @ 7:30 am an Emeco field mechanic was completing his weekly service vehicle inspection. He grabbed the fire extinguisher mounted in his truck and noticed that the powder contents had settled at the bottom of the canister. He tapped the bottom of the fire extinguisher with a rubber mallet to help loosen the chemical contents.

The fire extinguisher erupted (exploded) causing the canister to shoot towards the ground and the chemical contents to release into the workers face. The force of the discharge removed his hard hat and covered him with the powder chemical. A co-worker assisted him to the nearest eyewash station and began flushing his eyes, then was taken to the Fort McMurray hospital for further eye examination.

The workers injury resulted in a scratch cornea, and he is required to wear a contact lense to help with healing process and to eliminate further irritation and discomfort. In addition worker has also been prescribed eye drops that he needs to use every couple of hours.



## INITIAL FINDINGS

The fire extinguisher was being used within its specification and had been inspected by a qualified 3<sup>rd</sup> party within the required 12 month period (6 months).

Emeco has engaged "Fire Protection" (an industry expert) to assist in the investigation and they are inspecting the canister. Their initial inspections suggest that the fire extinguisher may have evidence of a defective weld on the bottom of canister.

"Fire Protection" are performing a more detailed inspection and are researching any prior similar events

## IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Visual inspection should only consist of the following
  - a) verifying that the fire extinguisher gauge is still properly charged
  - b) verify external inspected within the last year
  - c) the pin and hose are present and in good condition
  - d) the fire extinguisher canister has no visible damage or rust
2. Fire Extinguisher experts recommend **no hitting or tapping the bottom of fire extinguishers with any blunt objects**, only use palm of hand.
3. Vertical or horizontal mount of fire extinguisher needs to be followed as per manufacturer's recommendations.

These recommendations have been implemented through our daily tool box discussions.

We will share any further findings as they become available.

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Emeco Canada