

4 COMPLIANCE OPTIONS FOR USE OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Each employer must choose among the following four options for compliance with the OSHA rule for the use of portable fire extinguishers (29 CFR 1910.157) to fight fires.

1 There are no fire extinguishers, and you sound a fire alarm and evacuate all employees when a fire occurs.

A written Emergency Action Plan is required.



2 You keep portable fire extinguishers in the workplace, but do not want employees fighting fires and therefore evacuate all employees.

There are cases where fire extinguishers may be required in some work areas by insurance companies or local fire departments for use by firefighters but your employees are not designated or trained to use them. Employers who select this option still must ensure the extinguishers are maintained, inspected, and tested.

A written Emergency Action Plan (29 CFR 1910.38) and Fire Prevention Plan (29 CFR 1910.39) are required for this option.



3 You evacuate all employees from the danger area except those persons designated to use portable fire extinguishers.

The employer distributes extinguishers to locations so they are available to the employees designated and trained to fight incipient (i.e., small and just beginning) stage fires. The facility's Emergency Action Plan may include the list of employees designated to use portable fire extinguishers.



4 Any employee may use a fire extinguisher to fight an incipient fire; evacuation may not be required during the control of an incipient stage fire.

Employers who provide portable fire extinguishers for use by any employee to use in fighting incipient stage fires must comply with the fire extinguisher rule in its entirety, including the requirement to train all employees in fire extinguisher use.

