



October 7–13 is National Fire Prevention Week

National Fire Prevention Week is coming and it is a good time to review with your drivers how to prevent fires and how to react to a fire that occurs in their commercial motor vehicle.

Fire extinguisher inspection is a vital part of a driver's daily vehicle inspection process. It amazes me how many times I will be looking at a truck and find the fire extinguisher has lost its pressure due to a leak or was used and returned to the truck without being recharged. The actions of a driver at the time of a fire are crucial in saving lives and controlling the amount of loss.

When a fire occurs in a commercial motor vehicle the driver has to know two things:

1. Knowledge about fires



2. How to operate a fire extinguisher

Fire safety and fire extinguisher operation should be part of every new driver's orientation program.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety regulations require that all commercial motor vehicles have a fire extinguisher on board that is of the correct size, type and properly secured and labeled. Did you know that a CMV with hazardous materials is required to have a different size extinguisher than those not carrying hazardous material?

Here are the requirements:

§393.95 Emergency equipment on all power units.

Each truck, truck tractor, and bus (except those towed in driveaway-towaway operations) must be equipped as follows:

(a) **Fire Extinguishers.**

(a)(1) **Minimum ratings:**

A power unit that is used to transport hazardous materials in a quantity that requires placarding must be equipped with a fire extinguisher having an Underwriters' Laboratories rating of 10 B:C or more.

A power unit that is not used to transport hazardous materials must be equipped with either:

A fire extinguisher having an Underwriters' Laboratories rating of 5 B:C or more.



Labeling and marking. Each fire extinguisher required by this section must be labeled or marked by the manufacturer with its Underwriters' Laboratories rating.

Visual Indicators. The fire extinguisher must be designed, constructed, and maintained to permit visual determination of whether it is fully charged.

Condition, location, and mounting. The fire extinguisher(s) must be filled and located so that it is readily accessible for use. The extinguisher(s) must be securely mounted to prevent sliding, rolling, or vertical movement relative to the motor vehicle.

When a fire occurs in a Commercial Motor Vehicle the driver should take the following actions:

1. Get the truck off of the roadway and into an open area if possible. Park away from buildings, trees, vehicles or anything else that may catch fire.
2. Call 911 on your cell phone to report the fire and location.
3. If the fire is already to a size that cannot be extinguished get away from the truck. Your life and the life of the general public is your first responsibility.
4. If you are operating a tractor trailer and can safely disconnect the trailer from the tractor do so as not to damage both units and cargo in the fire.
5. If the engine is on fire turn off the engine as soon as possible.
6. Do not open the hood if possible and try to extinguish the fire from the louvers, radiator or underside of the truck. Opening the hood will provide additional oxygen to fire and it will increase at a more rapid rate.
7. If the fire is in your trailer or cargo box of the truck keep the doors shut. Here again additional oxygen will increase the intensity of the fire.
8. A tire fire will not likely be extinguished with a fire extinguisher. Try throwing dirt or sand on the tire to smother the fire.

What you can do to prevent the likelihood of a fire starting in your Commercial Motor Vehicle:

1. Complete a thorough pre and post trip inspection daily of the fuel, electrical, exhausts systems, tires and cargo of your truck.
2. Keep the unit clean from excess grease, fuel and oil.
3. Monitor your dash gauges while in operation for signs of overheating.
4. Utilize your mirrors for signs of smoke or flames.
5. With new Post Emission 2007 and newer units be aware of regeneration of the after treatment program and where the regeneration occurs as exhaust temperatures reach high levels of heat.
6. Know the cargo that you have on board and its fire potential.

