

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

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INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

Table with 5 columns: BULLETIN #, TITLE, DATE ISSUED, SUPERSEDES, RELEASED BY, APPROVED BY, SOURCE, SUPERSEDED BY. Row 1: 2013-10, Fire Extinguishers and the ADA, 12/19/13. Row 2: JDW, JDW, NFPA 10, ICC A-117.1.

Ensuring accessibility by all the population through ADA compliance is an important part of the design and construction of new facilities in New Hampshire. The required fire extinguisher electronic monitoring technology for new construction when a fire alarm is required raised a question regarding how ADA and the fire code meet in regards to fire extinguishers.

The State Fire Code adopts NFPA 10 which requires that fire extinguishers be mounted so that the top of the extinguisher is no higher than 60" above finish floor and the bottom of the extinguisher no less than 4" above the floor. The 2003 ICC A117.1 does not specifically address fire extinguisher mounting heights, but does have specific requirements for reaching for an object from a wheelchair. I believe that these requirements would certainly apply to fire extinguishers as far as the applicable accessibility code is concerned. The maximum high reach allowed shall be 48 inches. The minimum reach is 15 inches. Clear floor space requirements specific to the type of approach to the extinguisher must also be accommodated.

People in wheel chairs should be able to reach a fire extinguisher if needed. The obstruction detection of the fire extinguisher electronic monitoring system will help maintain the accessibility required by ADA. The Extinguisher electronic monitoring is required when the building is new construction and is required to have a fire alarm which in new construction is designed to include the appropriate location for horns/strobes to meet the notification requirements of ADA when a fire emergency is detected in a facility.

Although my original intent for requiring this technology was purely for life safety and first aid fire fighting use by the occupants. I had not considered that population that needs accessibility to all life safety devices. The fire extinguishers have to be accessible and most important when one would be accessed it is ready for use. The NH requirement for electronically monitoring fire extinguishers ensures the population with disabilities will have an accessible and usable fire extinguisher if needed along with sending an alarm when it is removed from the location so someone else knows there is a fire problem.