JL INDUSTRIES

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How to Select the Right Cabinet for Portable Fire Extinguishers

Are Cabinets Required for Fire Extinguishers?

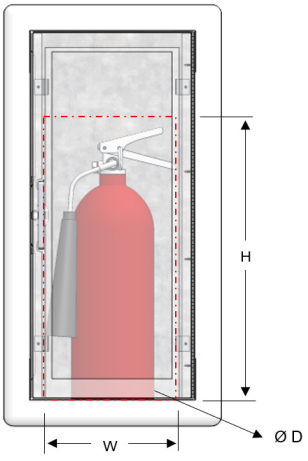
No, as a general rule, they are not, but a cabinet can offer several benefits

- International Building Code (IBC), International Fire Code (IFC) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) do not require portable fire extinguishers to be in a cabinet
- An extinguisher in a cabinet can deter tampering and provide protection from the elements or corrosive coastal conditions. Some local codes may require cabinets to prevent theft
- Allow the extinguisher to be recessed into a wall to meet ADA maximum 4" projection standards
- NFPA 10 requires that fire extinguishers subject to physical damage should be protected



Pictured, JL Industries fire extinguishers series: 1-Galaxy, 2-Sentinel, 3-Mercury, 4-Cosmic, 5-Saturn

How Do I Select the Right Cabinet?



Determine the type and overall size of extinguisher, then choose a cabinet size that provides at least 1" clearance

- You will need to consider three dimensions, the total height including handle, total width including hose, and the total depth or tank diameter. Co2 extinguishers have a wide horn on the hose, requiring a wider cabinet
- Using the three dimensions, look at the cabinet manufacturer's data page and see which tub inside dimension size will give you at least 1" of clearance in height, width and depth
- Many cabinets have a door frame or stop that is slightly smaller than the interior of the cabinet, so make sure that the extinguisher can be easily removed from the cabinet in the case of a fire

Does the extinguisher have to be mounted on a wall bracket inside the cabinet?

No, they do not, except for bubble cabinets. Some 20 lb extinguishers must be mounted on the tub wall instead of sitting on the bottom of the cabinet in order to close the door. Follow the manufacturer's installation instructions

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What Kind of Handles, Locks and Latches Can Be Used?

There are many handle and lock options available for cabinets. The standard door pull handle latches with a roller catch. Other options include recessed, lever, magnetic, keyed locks, mortise locks and even detention locks

- The door pull for an extinguisher cabinet is considered an "operable part" by Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards. They must be usable with one hand and without tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist, or more than 5 lbs of force

- Several manufacturers offer a feature that has a lock with a flexible cam, and a pull handle. These cabinets can be locked and are used as theft and tamper deterrents because they appear to need a key to be unlocked, but because of the flexible cam, the cabinet can be easily opened with a sharp pull on the handle. Cabinets equipped with that feature are not considered "locked" for code purposes

- Per 2024 IBC Section 906.8, cabinets must not be locked unless they are installed where extinguishers are subject to malicious use or damage, or in security facilities with Group I-3 occupancies and in mental health areas in Group I-2 occupancies. In those cases, access to extinguishers shall be permitted to be locked or to be located in staff locations provided the staff has keys

- 2024 IBC Section 905.7.2 also addresses locking cabinet doors. Cabinets shall be unlocked, except when visual identification panels of glass or other approved transparent frangible material is easily broken and allows access; or when locking arrangements approved; or in Group I-3 occupancies

- A "break glass" feature on a cabinet may not include a handle, but do provide a hammer or a lever that is to be used to break the glass to get into the cabinet



JL Industries Ambassador Series showing Standard Pull and Flexible Cam Key Lock (exterior view)

Interior View: Flexible Cam Key Lock





JL Industries Security Series showing Detention Lock for I-3 facilities

Cato's Chief Series showing Break Glass feature with a Hammer



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Is Lettering Required on the Cabinet?

It depends. Some code officials and areas require the cabinet to be labeled with decal or diecut “Fire Extinguisher” lettering regardless of the door and glass style. Check with your local code official for requirements in your area

- 2024 IBC Section 905.7.1 require that cabinets containing fire-fighting equipment such as standpipes, fire hoses, fire extinguishers, fire department valves shall be identified in an approved manner by a permanently attached sign with letters not less than 2” high in a color that contrasts with the background color indicating the equipment contained therein. Exceptions are; doors not large enough to accommodate a written sign, shall be marked with a permanently attached pictogram of the equipment contained therein; doors with an approved clear glass panel or a complete glass door panel



JL Industries Ambassador
2” black lettering



JL Industries Academy
Pictogram Decal



JL Industries Embassy
Pictogram engraved

Is a Full Glass Door Required for the Cabinet?

No, a full glass door is not a universal requirement for cabinets. However, it is a common and compliant design choice in most commercial and public installations

- A full glass or vertical glass panel in the door allows visualization of the extinguisher inside and also complies with IBC. IBC requires additional signage if the extinguisher is not visible - as in the case of a solid door, or small view window
- Some areas may require a bubble type glazing in the cabinet instead of flat glazing so that the contents can be easily viewed

JL Industries Ambassador
Surface Mount, Full View



JL Industries Cosmopolitan
Semi-Recessed, Vertical Duo



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1 2 3 4

Exterior Cabinet Examples Left to Right: 1- Cato Chief (plastic), 2 - JL Industries FB Series (fiberglass), 3 - JL Industries Classic Series (white powdercoat galvanneal steel), 4 - JL Industries Academy Series (aluminum)

What Construction Material is Best for a Cabinet?

The cabinet material selected depends on the application and use

- For **interior use**: Common material types include steel, stainless steel and aluminum
- For **exterior use**: Plastic, fiberglass, galvanneal steel and aluminum cabinets can prove to be more resistant to moisture and corrosive coastal conditions

When Are Signs Required?

Fire extinguisher cabinet signs are required whenever the extinguisher is not clearly visible from a distance or when it is stored in a cabinet, recessed area, or other enclosure that could obscure it

- NFPA 10 Section 6.1.3.3 Visual Obstructions addresses signs for fire extinguishers. In rooms and in locations where visual obstructions cannot be avoided, signs or other means shall be provided to indicate the extinguisher location
- Class K kitchen extinguishers in a facility with an automatic fire protection system are required by NFPA 10 section 5.5.5.3, to have a sign near the extinguisher that states that the fire protection system shall be actuated prior to using the fire extinguisher



Pictured: JL Industries Cosmopolitan Series with Class K Signage

Do I Need a Special Cabinet If My Wall is Fire-Rated?



Yes, a fire rated cabinet is required per 2024 IBC Section 714.4.2 - Membrane penetrations shall comply with Section 714.4.1 which states through penetrations shall be protected by an approved through-penetration system installed and tested in accordance with ASTM E814 or UL 1479

Pictured: JL Industries Cosmopolitan Series FIRE-FX2® is UL 1479 classified and labeled

This document is a guideline only, as interpretation of building codes may vary
Consult your local AHJ for appropriate standards in your area.

Nona Peterson 7-24-2026

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