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## Compass

# New fire extinguisher regulations

According to the [Federal Register](#), the U.S. Coast Guard has issued new fire extinguisher regulations for motorized recreational boats that go into effect April 20, 2022.

The new rules don't include changes for when and how many [fire extinguishers](#) are required on boats. If your boat was required to carry a fire extinguisher(s), those requirements still apply.

## Major changes

The Coast Guard now uses the Underwriters Laboratory performance-based classification system for portable fire extinguishers. Most extinguishers already have Coast Guard and UL rating classifications. All approved extinguishers installed before August 22, 2016, can remain on recreational vessels as long as they are serviceable.

The new classification system requires portable and semi-portable extinguishers to be marked with a combined number and letter designation. The letter designates what class of fire the extinguisher is suitable for. The number indicates the extinguishing potential.

## Ratings

In addition to being onboard and readily accessible, all portable and semi-portable fire extinguishers must be "Marine Type-USCG Approved" with the correct classification. This means they must have the Coast Guard classification system marking and approval number on the label.

- Extinguishers **UL Classified 5-B:C/10-B:C** (or greater) meet carriage requirements for all recreational vessels regardless of vessel age.
- Extinguishers rated as **Marine Type USCG Type B:C, size I or size II** are only acceptable on vessels built in model year 2017 or earlier.
- Ratings that include higher numbers or more letters are acceptable.
- One 20-B extinguisher may be carried to replace two required 5-B extinguishers.
- The regulations include special rules for vessels built prior to 1952.

## Age

Disposable fire extinguishers cannot be older than 12 years from the date stamp on the bottle. Expired disposable extinguishers must be removed from service and taken off the boat on December 31 of their 12th year.

## Condition

Extinguishers must be in good, serviceable working condition, meaning

- pressure gauges or indicators, if present, must be in the operable range or position;
- lock pins must be firmly in place;
- discharge nozzles should be clean and free of obstruction; and
- extinguishers should show no visible signs of significant corrosion or damage.

For more information, check out the [U.S. Coast Guard's FAQ](#) on the new regulations. You can also read [this guidance for vessel examiners](#) performing vessel safety checks.

## SJDPS Summary

Previously installed extinguishers with extinguishing capacities that are less than what is required in the table below need not be replaced but must be maintained in good condition.

All extinguishers installed after August 22, 2016, must meet the applicable requirements.

Boats less than 26 feet and 2018 model year or newer must carry unexpired "5-B" "10-B" or "20-B" fire extinguishers. Having older "B-I" and "B-II" types do not meet the new carriage requirements

(a) *Recreational vessels 65 feet or less in length.* (1) A recreational vessel 65 feet or less in length must carry at least the minimum number of portable fire extinguishers set forth in the table below. **A vessel less than 26 feet in length, propelled by an outboard motor, is not required to carry portable fire extinguishers if the construction of the vessel will not permit the entrapment of explosive or flammable gases or vapors.**

*One 20-B portable fire extinguisher may be substituted for two 5-B portable fire extinguishers.*

Goes into effect April 20, 2022

Vessel Length	No Fixed System	With approved Fixed Systems
Less than 26'	1 B-1/5-B/10-B	0
26' to less than 40'	2 B-1/5-B/10-B or 1 B-II/20-B	1 B-1/5-B/10-B
40' to 65'	3 B-1/5-B/10-B or 1 B-II/20-B and 1 B-1/5-B/10-B	2 B-1/5-B/10-B or 1 B-II/20-B