



INDUSTRY ADVISORY

7565 GADSDEN HWY. ♦ TRUSSVILLE, ALABAMA 35173 ♦ PH: (205) 655-3271 ♦ FAX: 1-800-854-5980 ♦ email: sales@amerex-fire.com

UL Listed Halon 1211 Fire Extinguishers

UL has announced that it will withdraw their Standard for Halogenated Fire Extinguishers – UL 1093 – on September 26, 2009. After September 26, 2009 UL will not allow an extinguisher manufacturer to label extinguishers with the UL mark and listing. In a recent bulletin UL announced the withdrawal of UL Standard 1093, citing influence from the EPA and FAA. Alternative agents, such as Halotron I, in specific model extinguishers are now approved for use aboard aircraft by the FAA as long as their guidelines are met. Over the past several years the main users of Halon 1211 extinguishers have been the military and the aerospace industry.

Since UL has made this announcement there has been some confusion and speculation in the field regarding the viability of existing Halon 1211 fire extinguishers, whether fire extinguishers need to be removed from service, availability of parts, etc. The following is a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) on this subject:

Q: Will all Halon 1211 extinguishers have to be removed after September 26, 2009?

A: No. Just as we have seen with UL 300, UL 711, UL 1254, etc – whenever there is a change or new addition of the UL Test Standard and a published effective date, it impacts the manufacturing of the equipment, not what is already manufactured and in the field. The withdrawal of UL 1093 will mean that on September 26, 2009 fire extinguisher manufacturers will no longer be able to manufacture a Halon 1211 fire extinguisher bearing a UL label showing a UL Listing and Rating. There is no requirement – to our knowledge – in any Code Legislation or Regulatory action requiring the removal of Halon 1211 extinguishers either after September 26, 2009 or for any stated date in the future.

Q: Will Amerex continue supply of replacement parts for their Halon 1211 extinguishers after September 26, 2009?

A: Yes. Amerex will continue to offer the same replacement parts that we currently offer until further notice.

Q: Will I still be able to inspect, maintain, recharge and hydrostatically test Halon 1211 extinguishers after September 26, 2009?

A: Yes. As long as the manufacturer's parts are available and recycled Halon 1211 that meets the original specification is used, Halon 1211 extinguishers may still be inspected, maintained, recharged and hydrostatically tested. Of course, such procedures must follow the requirements of NFPA 10 and the manufacturer's service manual.

Q: Can I substitute FE-36 or Halotron I in place of Halon 1211 when recharging a Halon 1211 extinguisher?

A: No! NFPA 10 specifically prohibits the conversion of one extinguisher to another type of extinguisher. This would raise many questions regarding the UL Listing of the extinguisher, compatibility of the extinguisher materials with the replacement agent, the UL rating would be violated along with the manufacturer's warranty and sole liability would be placed on the servicing agency.

Q: The local Fire Marshal told me to remove every Halon 1211 extinguisher that I encounter. Do I have to?

A: Probably – local AHJ (Authorities Having Jurisdiction) have their own requirements that may exceed State Fire Codes and National Standards. It is important to remind such authorities that there is no such requirement in any Federal or State Code, nor is there any such requirement in any nationally recognized Standard or International Treaty (such as the Montreal Protocol). Removing Halon 1211 extinguishers from service does not dispose of the gas, and it is unnecessary emissions that are to be avoided.

Q: Will Amerex continue to manufacture Halon 1211 extinguishers?

A: Yes. Amerex manufactures extinguishers for the U.S. military that do not bear a UL label. The decision by UL to remove the 1093 test standard only affects extinguishers bearing the UL label and UL mark. There are several extinguishers that Amerex manufactures specifically for critical use by the U.S. military that are not UL listed and will continue to be manufactured for the U.S. military as long as they are required by the military for the protection of our troops and their equipment.

Q: Will there be a time when I can no longer service Halon 1211 extinguishers?

A: Sure, at some point in the future, it may be no longer economically feasible to keep these extinguishers in service. There may be other political and environmental factors that come into play in the future that will bring about the final removal of Halon 1211 extinguishers. As the use of Halon 1211 extinguishers continues to decrease, and the number of Halon 1211 extinguisher remaining in the field dwindles through attrition and obsolescence, it may become impractical for Amerex to continue to support this product through the supply of replacement parts and even complete non-UL Listed extinguishers. Amerex will certainly advise of any such situation as it becomes present. In the mean time, it is critical that all Fire Equipment Distributors, other entities, end users and individuals who service Halon 1211 extinguishers continue to be good stewards of the environment by meeting the requirements of NFPA 10 along with the manufacturer's service manuals to control unwanted emissions of Halon 1211.