

Hurricane Horror Averted

Alan Hartline and his neighbors in the Lake Wales, Florida, area were enduring the third hurricane of the season. Because of a power outage, he was sitting in the dark in his kitchen on September 26, 2004, when he noticed a figure run by the window. Seconds later he heard a knock at his door. His new neighbor gasped, "Do you have a fire extinguisher?" As owner of SunState Fire Extinguisher Service for over twenty years, Hartline naturally had multiple extinguishers on hand.

"There's a fire in my house," she explained. Hartline grabbed a 10 lb A:B:C dry chemical extinguisher and followed her to her house, climbing over a gate, which was stuck shut, to get there. She indicated that the fire was in the front bathroom. Having been friendly with the previous owners of the house, Hartline knew exactly where that was located and proceed there, ducking down below the smoke, which measured approximately five feet down from the ceiling throughout the entire house. Finding the shower curtain ablaze with flames that reached the ceiling, he pulled the pin and extinguished the fire.

Hearing the neighbor say that "Michelle is still in the house," he and his son Shane, who had joined them by this time, returned inside to look for whom they assumed was one of the family's children. Shane yelled when he located Michelle, the family's dog, in the rear bathroom shower. Hartline ran to the back of the house, grabbed the dog's collar, and led her to safety.

He grabbed a water hose to cool the embers down, and someone called the fire department to make sure nothing else was on fire. As Hartline soaked the embers, he asked the neighbor how the fire started. She said that it had been a candle.

Hartline estimated that if the fire had burned for another thirty seconds, the flames would have reached the attic and the house, and Michelle would most likely have been lost. In this case, a fire extinguisher saved a \$200,000 home and a beloved pet.

Thanks to Alan Hartline, owner and president of NAFED member company SunState Fire Extinguisher Service, Inc. in Lake Wales, Florida, for submitting this story.

Church Arson Fire Doused by Priest

Alerted to the fire by a neighbor who saw smoke pouring out of the building, Father Edward Rice, pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in South St. Louis, used a fire extinguisher to put out an arson fire in the sacristy (the room where priests prepare for services) on August 18, 2004. Someone had reportedly set fire to some vestments in the room. Father Rice said of extinguishers like the one he used, "We were lucky we had [one] right there. You don't give them a second thought until you need them. They're as valuable as gold then. Thank God it was in good condition. It's good to have those things checked."

Source: "Priest's Quick Action Snuffs Sacristy Fire," by Joseph Kenny, St. Louis Review Online (www.stlouisreview.com), August 27, 2004. Thanks to Dan Donnelly of NAFED member company Alltype Fire Protection Company, a Cintas Co. in St. Louis, Missouri, for submitting this story.

Extinguishers Snuff Out Hotel Fire

The Santa Rosa Fire Department received a report of a fire in room 125 at the Days Inn on Santa Rosa Avenue around 1 a.m. on September 7, 2004. The first-arriving units reported smoke showing as they came down the avenue near the complex. As they entered the complex and approached the room, the smoke had died down. They arrived to find that the fire in an air conditioning unit, floor lamp, and curtains had been successfully knocked down by motel employees and guests with four 5 lb A:B:C extinguishers that were located in cabinets around the unit. Very little water was used to douse the remaining hot spots on the carpet and curtains.

The unoccupied room sustained some smoke damage, and the carpet, curtains, and air conditioner required replacement. The remaining contents of the room were undamaged. As a motel employee picked up the empty extinguishers and moved them out of the way, one of the fire fighters heard him say "these things [extinguishers] work great. I'm glad we had them."

Thanks to Dave Ricci, an owner of NAFED member company Santa Rosa Fire Equipment Service Inc. in Santa Rosa, California, for submitting this story.

Fax fire extinguisher success stories to (312) 263-8111. It is not possible to publish all submissions, and those that are selected may be edited.

Extinguishers, Band Help Save Recording Studio

In the early morning hours of August 11, 2004, a fire damaged the recording studio in Burbank, California, being used by the band Black Eyed Peas. It was started by an unattended candle, which ignited sound-absorbing material used in the recording process. Nobody was in the room at the time. One of the studio's assistant engineers saw the flames and smoke upon returning to the studio and emptied an extinguisher onto the blaze. An engineer with the band used a second extinguisher to help fight the fire. The band members helped secure the area, and the fire department quickly arrived to finish the job. Studio Executive Vice President Hank Neuberger said, "...the band assisted in making sure all people on the premises were safe and accounted for. The band was heroic in their assistance." He continued to laud the extinguishers. "The fire department said that the effort in using the fire extinguishers knocked back the advancing fire and contributed to saving the studio. Only about 20 percent of the facility has been affected."

Source: "Fire Damages Studio Where Black Eyed Peas Are Recording," by James Montgomery, MTV.com – News, August 11, 2004. ♦

Have you got a fire extinguisher success story to send in? How about some company news you'd like to share? Maybe there is some legislative activity going on in your area that might be of interest to other NAFED members. Whatever it is, NAFED wants to hear from you. Please send in your stories to the editor, and remember that all contributions become the property of NAFED, are subject to editing for space and clarity, and are included as space allows.

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NAFED appreciates your contribution!

Have You Experienced This Problem?

How Do You Fit 7 lb of Agent in a 5 lb Cylinder?

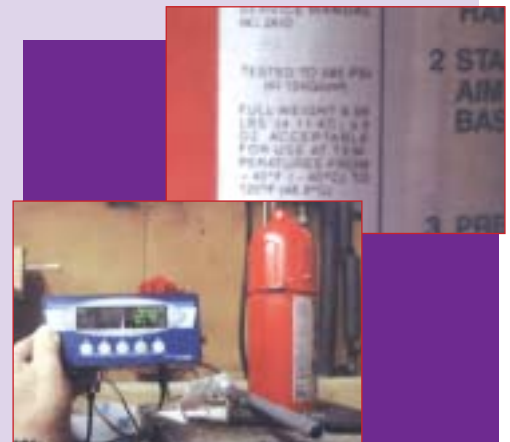
Dave Ricci wrote to NAFED about a situation he recently encountered in which an extinguisher needing service did not weigh out, when filled, to the full weight on the label.

A customer brought in a 1985 American-manufactured 5 lb A:B:C extinguisher for service. After it passed hydrostatic testing, it was dried and set up for recharge. The technician working on the extinguisher notified Ricci that no matter what he did, he could not get the extinguisher filled to the weight stated on the label.

Filled with agent, and with the valve and hose, the extinguisher weighed 8.4 lb, more than .5 lb less than the full weight of 9.05 lb on the label. After making sure that no more chemical could be added and that the scale was reading correctly (by weighing three new extinguishers and noting that they were all within the label full weights), Ricci instructed the tech to empty the extinguisher and check the empty weight. The cylinder, valve assembly, and hose weighed 2.4 lb empty. Adding 5 lb of A:B:C chemical to the extinguisher came out to 7.4 lb. This weighed more than 1.5 lb less than the label full weight.

Ricci contacted the California state fire marshal to see if anyone had run into this situation before. The fire marshal suggested condemning the cylinder and noted that servicing an extinguisher like this and sending it back to the customer could result in a fine for putting out an extinguisher that was not correct by the full weight noted on the label despite the fact that it does contain 5 lb of agent.

Thanks to Dave Ricci, an owner of NAFED member company Santa Rosa Fire Equipment Service Inc. in Santa Rosa, California, for sending in this story.



Has an experience like this ever happened to you? If so, please let us know how you handled it. Fax stories to (312) 263-8111.

Submissions may or may not be published. Those that are selected may be edited.