

Anhydrous Ammonia Discovered in Stolen Fire Extinguishers



As the process becomes more prevalent, *Firewatch!* has attempted to keep its readers up-to-date on situations in which extinguisher cylinders have been hijacked for use in illegal methamphetamine production. In November, fifteen fire extinguishers were reported stolen in Indiana, including red five- and ten-pound A:B:C extinguishers and silver pressurized water cylinders.



Two were located about a week later by a maintenance worker in a Kendallville, Indiana, apartment complex parking lot, but as he approached one, he began to feel dizzy and weak. Officials discovered both extinguishers contained anhydrous ammonia, and one had begun to leak. Anhydrous ammonia is extremely flammable and a serious health hazard.



There are warning signs that a fire extinguisher has been tampered with and may contain anhydrous ammonia:

- ◆ The brass valve assembly may be blue.
- ◆ The aluminum valve assemblies may deteriorate.
- ◆ The horn may be cut off from the end of the hose.
- ◆ It is clear that attempts were made to remove markings from the extinguisher.
- ◆ The extinguisher gauge may still show pressure in the extinguisher.
- ◆ Non-factory tape may be visible on the valve assembly.



As of November 24, 2004, four of the fifteen missing extinguishers had been recovered. ◆

Has an experience like this ever happened to you, your business, or your community? If so, please let us know. Fax, email, or mail stories to (312) 263-8111, kristenm@nafed.org, or 104 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 300, Chicago, IL 60603. Submissions may or may not be published. Those that are selected may be edited.



Photos and information provided by Kendallville, Indiana, Fire Department, (260) 347-1252.

