

BS 7863:2009



BSI British Standards

Recommendations for colour coding to indicate the extinguishing media contained in portable fire extinguishers

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Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages i to iv, pages 1 to 4, an inside back cover and a back cover.

Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI and came into effect on 30 September 2009. It was prepared by Technical Committee FSH/2, *Fire extinguishers*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes BS 7863:1996, which is withdrawn.

Relationship with other publications

This British Standard is related to BS EN 3, which allows an area of up to 10% of the surface area of the extinguisher to be colour coded subject to national regulations. It is the purpose of BS 7863 to recommend the colours to be used to identify the contents of the extinguishers and define the location of such colours.

BS EN 3 is published in the following parts:

- Part 6: *Provisions for the attestation of conformity of portable fire extinguishers in accordance with EN 3 Part 1 to Part 5;*
- Part 7: *Characteristics, performance requirements and test methods;*
- Part 8: *Additional requirements to EN 3-7 for the construction, resistance to pressure and mechanical tests for extinguishers with a maximum allowable pressure equal to or lower than 30 bar;*
- Part 9: *Additional requirements to EN 3-7 for pressure resistance of CO₂ extinguishers.*

A new part, prEN 3-10, is in preparation, and is expected to supersede the current BS EN 3-6 in due course.

Information about this document

This is a full revision of the standard, and introduces the following principal changes:

- updating of the scope to reflect more fully the recommendations of the standard;
- updating of the recommendations to reflect changes to the BS EN 3 series of standards.

When BS 7863 was first published in 1996, BS EN 3 had just been published and it required the bodies of fire extinguishers to be painted red. The majority of extinguishers manufactured to the previous standard BS 5423 were painted in a colour to indicate the media contained within them. It was recognized that in an emergency, a user could be in danger of selecting the wrong equipment for the situation.

Against this background, it was considered that a need existed to provide, for the general user, a means whereby the contents of fire extinguishers could be indicated. This revision of BS 7863 brings the guidance up to date.

Use of this document

This British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

Presentational conventions

The provisions in this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is "should".

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations for the colour coding used to identify the extinguishing medium for portable fire extinguishers, and for the size and location of the colour indication.

NOTE The requirements of BS EN 3 and the recommendations of this standard concerning colour coding apply only to new extinguishers.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

BS 381C:1996, *Specification for colours for identification, coding and special purposes*

BS EN 3-7:2004+A1:2007, *Portable fire extinguishers – Part 7: Characteristics, performance requirements and test methods*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the definitions given in BS EN 3-7 apply.

4 Colour coding

4.1 The colour of the body of a portable fire extinguisher conforming to BS EN 3 is signal red (RAL 3000 as specified in BS EN 3-7:2004+A1:2007, 16.1, or colour reference 537 as specified in BS 381C:1996).

4.2 All extinguishers should be colour coded to designate the extinguishing medium contained therein. The colour coding used to denote the extinguishing medium should be as given in Table 1.

Table 1 Colour coding for extinguishing media

Extinguishing media	Colour to indicate extinguishing medium	BS 381C:1996 reference	Equivalent RAL colour reference ^{A)}
Water	Red	537	RAL 3000
Foam	Pale cream	352	RAL 1014
Powder (all types)	Blue	166	RAL 5002
Carbon dioxide	Black	—	RAL 9005
Wet chemical	Canary yellow	309	RAL 1023
Clean agent (including halons)	Green	228	RAL 6016

^{A)} RAL colours are specified in Farbreister RAL 841-GL, RAL Deutsches Institut für Gütesicherung und Kennzeichnung, Siegberger Straße 39, D-53757 Sankt Augustin, Germany (<http://www.ral.de>).

5 Size and location of colour indication

5.1 The colour indication should appear on the front of the portable fire extinguisher, and should be placed within the label and/or immediately above the marking for part 1 of the label as specified in BS EN 3-7:2004+A1:2007, 16.2 and Figure 2. The area of any text or symbols appearing within the coloured area should be discounted.

5.2 The colours should be visible through a horizontal arc of 180° when the extinguisher is correctly mounted.

5.3 The area of the colour indication should be up to 10% of the body area, but in no case less than 3% of the body area.

5.4 All text in part 1 of the label (as shown in BS EN 3-7:2004+A1:2007, Figure 2) should be in a colour that contrasts with the background colour. Examples of contrasting colours are given in BS 5499-1:2002, Table 1.

5.5 Any colours used on the body of the extinguisher and/or any labels should be of such an area or intensity as not to detract from the colour used to designate the extinguishing medium.

NOTE If it is not clear which colour is used to designate the extinguishing medium, there is a possibility that in an emergency a user might select the wrong equipment for the situation.

Bibliography

For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

BS 5499-1:2002, *Graphical symbols and signs – Safety signs, including fire safety signs – Part 1: Specification for geometric shapes, colours and layout*

BS EN 3-6, *Portable fire extinguishers – Part 6: Provisions for the attestation of conformity of portable fire extinguishers in accordance with EN 3 Part 1 to Part 5*

BS EN 3-8, *Portable fire extinguishers – Part 8: Additional requirements to EN 3-7 for the construction, resistance to pressure and mechanical tests for extinguishers with a maximum allowable pressure equal to or lower than 30 bar*

BS EN 3-9, *Portable fire extinguishers – Part 9: Additional requirements to EN 3-7 for pressure resistance of CO₂ extinguishers*

prEN 3-10, *Portable fire extinguishers – Part 10: Provisions for evaluating the conformity of a portable fire extinguisher to EN 3 Part 7*¹⁾

¹⁾ In preparation; expected to supersede BS EN 3-6 when it is published as BS EN 3-10.

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