



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Inspections and Compliance Directorate

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Alert 01-13

Counterfeit Portable Fire Extinguishers

The Coast Guard has recently become aware of counterfeits of *U.S. Coast Guard approved* portable fire extinguishers manufactured by Amerex Corporation and Buckeye Fire Equipment. Both companies are major producers of genuine approved fire extinguishing equipment and serve a worldwide market. These counterfeit extinguishers present a significant safety hazard. Their capability to extinguish a fire is unproven; they may be charged with a powdery substance that is not a fire extinguishing agent, the pressure cylinder is not DOT approved, and the pressure gauge may not function or give false readings.

The dry-chemical counterfeit extinguishers are size B-II and may be identified by several distinguishing features:

Counterfeit units may have duplicate serial numbers. Genuine approved extinguishers will have a unique serial number for each extinguisher. For counterfeit Amerex extinguishers, the serial No V-654690 has been reported. There may be other serial numbers used on the counterfeits. For counterfeit Buckeye extinguishers, the serial No K-094927 with a red handle and serial No YM-U76222 with a black handle have been reported.

The labels on counterfeit extinguishers may be simply printed. Labels on genuine approved extinguishers will include a security imprint / texture behind the UL LISTED logo, classification, testing and approval data. Genuine Amerex Corporation extinguishers will have a pattern of scored "circles," and genuine Buckeye Fire Equipment extinguishers will have the letter "S" scored into the label.



The bottoms of the counterfeits have a rounded curved-in lip as shown on the right side of the image on the right. The bottom of a genuine Amerex extinguisher is shown on the left side of the image. Genuine Buckeye extinguishers will have a date stamped on the bottom.





The counterfeit extinguishers have been reported to have black or red plastic handles. Genuine approved dry-chemical B-II extinguishers typically have handles that are constructed of silver-colored aluminum (although there are some with plastic handles).

Pressure gauges on the counterfeit units may be the wrong color. The gauges on genuine approved Buckeye dry-chemical extinguishers will have a red background.

Counterfeit extinguishers may have welded seams on the sides of the cylinders.

The Coast Guard believes that counterfeit production is not limited to Amerex Corporation and Buckeye Fire Equipment. There has been unconfirmed mention of a possible case with Badger portable fire extinguishers. However, at this time there have been no confirmed reports of counterfeit units from other manufacturers.

The Coast Guard **strongly recommends** that vessel owner / operators inspect their equipment. Inspectors, surveyors, owner / operators and others suspecting that they may have identified counterfeit extinguishers should contact the Coast Guard Office of Design and Engineering Standards immediately. Please provide a description of the suspect units, including if possible photographs showing full front, rear, and bottom views of the extinguishers, along with close-ups of all labels, and submit this information to typeapproval@uscg.mil with a copy to anticounterfeiting@us.ul.com.

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