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# Expert Commentary on BS 5306-8:2012, *Fire extinguishing installations and equipment on premises — Selection and positioning of portable fire extinguishers — Code of practice*

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## Summary

BS 5306-8 was first published in 2000, when it was separated from BS 5306-3 to sit alongside a whole series of BS 5306 standards. It was decided that BS 5306-3 should concentrate on the actual maintenance of portable fire extinguishers and service intervals, whilst BS 5306-8 would cover the selection, siting and positioning of portable fire extinguishers. The 2012 edition is the only revision to the original.

Throughout the revision of BS 5306-8 recognition has been made of changes in the relevant legislation, particularly The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (England & Wales), The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations and The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland)

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## 2 Normative references

BS 5306-8 has the list of normative references updated. BS 2244-4, BS 7937 and BS EN 1869 were all deleted. These standards are not referred to in BS 5306-8.

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## 3 Terms and definitions

There have been a number of terms that have been modified to make their meaning clearer and some definitions have been added or deleted. The primary changes are:

- the definition for the *competent person* (replacing the supplier) – the person carrying out the maintenance of the portable fire extinguisher (service technician);
  - the definition for *responsible person* (replacing the user) – the person responsible for the premises, where the portable fire extinguishers are to be installed (customer); and
  - *chemical foam* and *soda acid* definitions were removed, as these substances are no longer used in portable fire extinguishers.
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## 4 Provision of extinguishers – General recommendations

The old standard had a subclause covering extinguisher colour coding. This has since been moved into Clause 5. The most significant change to this clause is the addition of Subclause 4.2 – the effect of using a portable fire extinguisher on the environment. This subclause was added to protect the competent person following a very long court case which could have had severe implications for the competent person. Following a malicious discharge of a fire extinguisher, the Crown Court ruled that the competent person had failed in his duty of care, to advise the responsible person that fire extinguishers, when discharged, make a mess and went on to rule that the competent person was responsible for the subsequent clean-up cost.