



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	11/4/2009	Interpretation	09-032
Topic	Fire Extinguisher Access		
Code Section(s)	Title 19 Section 596.4 (1964) and 567.2 (current)		
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1. **Does “readily accessible,” as used in Title 19, Section 567(j), mean a fire extinguisher cannot be in a locked cabinet?**

No, pursuant to Section 567 (j) fire extinguishers shall be readily accessible and immediately available in the event of a fire.

Locks may be permitted if the cabinet has emergency access and is approved by the authority having jurisdiction pursuant to the exception of this Section which states as follows: *“Where extinguishers are subject to malicious use, locked cabinets may be used provided they include a means of emergency access and are approved by the authority having jurisdiction.”*

2. **Does the 1964 edition of Title 19, Section 596.4 prohibit placing a fire extinguisher inside a locked cabinet with a glass front where there is no means of emergency access other than breaking the glass with your fist or hand?**

No, Title 19 Section 596.4 (1964) did not address fire extinguisher cabinets, therefore it would be left to the Authority Having Jurisdiction to determine the requirement, per Health and Safety Code section 13190.2. However, the current Title 19, Section 567.2 does address fire extinguisher cabinets.

3. **Prior to the enactment of Title 19, Section 567.2, did the California code of Regulations prohibit the locking of cabinets housing fire extinguishers?**

Title 19 did not specifically address fire extinguisher cabinets, however, Title 19 Section 563.2 required fire extinguishers in general to be readily accessible and visible.

4. **Does Title 19, Section 567.2 prohibit the locking of cabinets housing fire extinguishers after its enactment unless all the requirements of the exception are met?**

Yes.

5. **Does the manufacturer of a fire extinguisher cabinet determine what constitutes a “means of emergency access” as used in Title 19, Section 567.2?**

No. The exception to Title 19, Section 567.2 allows the Authority Having Jurisdiction to determine what an acceptable emergency access is.

6. **Does using a person’s fist to break the glass in a locked fire extinguisher cabinet constitute an acceptable “means of emergency access” as used in Title 19, Section 567.2?**

Possibly, it depends on the cabinet. The means of emergency access is a function of cabinet design and must ultimately be approved by the authority having jurisdiction.