

*Guidance for Handheld Extinguishers for Use in Aircraft*

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Hand extinguishers using halocarbon clean agents were developed in response to restrictions on the production of ozone-depleting halon fire extinguishing agents. The restrictions were introduced under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 which implemented the Montreal Protocol signed in 1987 as amended. Environmentally safe extinguishers containing the halocarbons HCFC Blend B, HFC-227ea, and HFC-236fa are now available. These halocarbons are safe, acceptable alternatives to Halon 1211 and have been found to provide an equivalent level of fire fighting performance. Some of these agents can be safely used in much smaller aircraft compartments than Halon 1211.

A task group was formed to review and assist updating the advisory circular for hand extinguishers. Their work was passed on to The FAA Air Certification Service for further development. The result is the current draft advisory circular (AC) which is intended to replace the existing AC No 20-42C for hand fire extinguishers for use in aircraft. This draft AC provides guidance for the proper selection, listing, marking, location, mounting, and safe-use of halocarbon extinguishers, as well as general guidance. It also provides guidance for water, dry powder, and carbon dioxide hand fire extinguishers, and guidance for continued use of the halocarbons Halon 1211, Halon 1301, and their blends. Discharged halon extinguishers are expected to be replaced with halon replacement halocarbon extinguishers, with the eventual phase-out of the halons.