

**From:** Virginia Gagan-Wilson | DOGS NSW  
**Sent:** Friday, 29 January 2021 1:40 PM  
**To:** Virginia Gagan-Wilson | DOGS NSW  
**Subject:** FW: Firefighting Equipment

**Subject:** Firefighting Equipment

Dear Karen,

I have grave concerns with the reports from our members regarding the advice being given by RSPCA Inspectors conducting breeder audits on behalf of the DPI, that to be compliant they must have a dry powder fire extinguisher. The Animal Code of Welfare Standard 6.3.1.6 requires that functioning firefighting equipment must be readily available and staff trained and practiced in its use, however, apart from a note that some fire retardants may be toxic to dogs and cats, the standard does not specify any particular firefighting equipment, the use of a dry powder fire extinguisher is the RSPCA interpretation of the standard. As you know I am a Captain in the NSW Rural Fire Service, in my 30 plus years in the service I have attended many incident of fire in sheds, garages and structures similar to those you might find in a kennel situation, I have seen the results of dry powder extinguishers used in confined spaces and would never ever discharge one near my own dogs, and am at a loss to understand why the RSPCA insists on them being the choice of functioning firefighting equipment in kennels & catteries. Dry powder fire extinguishers put fires out primarily by quickly interrupting the chemical reaction taking place and cutting off the oxygen supply, their high extinguishing capacity for their weight combined with their versatility has made them popular for use in many settings, but over the years it has become apparent that their use can cause some problems, of particular concern, if used around dogs and cats in a confined situation, is that the fine powder, although inert, can be toxic in that it can impact respiratory systems which in humans can cause severe breathing problems but in dogs and cats may prove fatal, another problem with the discharge of dry powder extinguishers in confined situations, is a sudden reduction of visibility that can result in people struggling to see well enough to quickly exit a facility, that clearly has the potential to endanger lives, especially if people are trying to save their dogs or cats. For the above reasons, powder fire extinguishers generally should not be mandated to be used indoors, or in small spaces, unless specified as the most appropriate choice by a fire risk assessment. Members would need to check with their individual insurance company but I think that in some circumstances, having powder fire extinguishers that haven't been specified through a fire risk assessment could invalidate their insurance.

Regards,

Hugh