Portable Fire Extinguishers Fatality File



One Worker Killed, Another Injured in Manhattan Fire Extinguisher Explosion

On the morning of Wednesday, May 13, 2020, 35-year-old worker Victor Pando was killed, and his 26-year-old colleague injured when a fire extinguisher exploded at the Morgan General Mail Facility at 341 Ninth Avenue in Manhattan.

The two men were injured by shrapnel that flew everywhere when the fire extinguisher exploded. Pando was struck in the neck with a piece of shrapnel; he was rushed to Lenox Hill Hospital, but tragically died of his injuries. His colleague, who was struck less severely, was transported to Bellevue Hospital. The younger worker’s injuries are reported to be non-life threatening.

The two workers were recharging fire extinguishers on the fourth floor of the Morgan General Mail Facility when one of them exploded, said Department of Buildings (DOB) Press Secretary Andrew Rudansky. The two men were contractors employed by Nordest Services, LLC. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is now investigating the incident and Nordest Services. According to Gothamist.com, the employer could not be reached for comment.

These men and their families are in our thoughts. We send our condolences to the family of the worker who was killed and hope for a speedy recovery for the injured worker.

Deaths and injuries caused by explosions on a work site are rare; according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2018 National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, there were only 115 fatal work injuries caused by fires and explosions in 2018. Clearly, however, they can still occur, and although it is not clear what exactly caused the fire extinguisher to explode in the above incident, it is always best to follow proper safety precautions to try and prevent such explosions from happening. It is important to note that fire extinguishers must comply with certain regulations in order to be considered safe for use.