

Fire Extinguisher Safety

Fire extinguishers can be powerful tools for fighting fires. They can also be dangerous if you do not understand how to operate them. Read the following guidelines to help you better understand how fire extinguishers work.

- * Portable fire extinguishers are designed to fight small short range fires.

- * A portable fire extinguisher will not be effective in a large home fire.

- * Children should not be using fire extinguishers.

- * Extinguishers have different ratings, you must use the correct extinguisher for the correct type of fire situation.

- * Fires are divided into 4 classes. Class A is ordinary combustibles such as wood, paper, and material. Class B is flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil, and oil based paint. Class C is electrical equipment, such as wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers, and appliance. Class K is fire from cooking related activities using media such as vegetable or animal oils and fats.

- * All fire extinguishers are labeled to tell what class of fire they

are able to fight. There are 2 ways your extinguisher may be labeled. Some extinguishers still use just a letter to identify the type of extinguisher. Newer extinguishers use standard pictures to show the different classes of fire.

* Try to purchase an ABC fire extinguisher for your home, this will cover almost any type of fire. Try to purchase a class K extinguisher to fight kitchen fires.

*Fire extinguishers should be mounted on a wall or in plain sight. They should be located away from heat sources and should be able to be obtained easily in a fire.

*Some extinguishers are one time use. This means they have to be disposed of after they have been used. Rechargeable fire extinguishers must be tested and serviced professionally according to the manufacture's recommendations.

* When operating a fire extinguisher, you need to follow the directions on the extinguisher, which you should be familiar with in advance. Follow these simple guidelines for all fire extinguishers. Remember the word PASS.

P=Pull the pin. This unlocks the operating system and allows you to be able to trigger the extinguisher.

A= Aim Low. Point the extinguisher nozzle, hose, or horn at the base or bottom of the fire.

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S=Squeeze the lever above the handle. This releases the extinguishing agent. Releasing the lever will stop the discharge. Some fire extinguishers may have a button instead of a lever.

S=Sweep from side to side. Moving carefully toward the fire, keep the extinguisher aimed at the base of the fire. Continue to do this moving closer as the fire begins to go out. Do not stop until all flames are out. Watch to make sure no flames reignite.



Information taken from NFPA resources and web site