



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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Using Portable Fire Extinguishers

If you ever need to use a fire extinguisher, you won't have time to read the directions first.

Take the time before an emergency to get acquainted with the fire extinguishers in your work area. Know what kind of extinguisher to use on each kind of fire and know how to quickly activate and use the extinguisher.

According to OSHA regulations, no one at a workplace is supposed to use a fire extinguisher unless he or she has been trained to do so. Though this may seem awfully restrictive, there are several good reasons for this rule. If an untrained person tries to extinguish a blaze, some serious mistakes can happen. Any of these mistakes can cause the fire to become worse, or injure or kill the individual.

Fire extinguishers are meant to be used on **small fires** that are in their incipient or **beginning** stages and to protect evacuation routes.

In the event of a fire, the correct use of a portable fire extinguisher could mean the difference between suffering a minor loss or a major one. Portable fire extinguishers, if used properly, can make that difference. But there are several things to consider in using fire extinguishers. For instance, you must know the class of fire involved and the correct type of fire extinguisher to use.

Classes of fires and fire extinguishers:

1. Class "A" involves ordinary combustibles such as paper, wood, cloth, rubber, or plastics. The common extinguishing media is water or dry chemical.
2. Class "B" flammable liquids, grease, or gases are covered under this category. Common extinguishing media are foam, carbon dioxide, or dry chemical.
3. Class "C" live electrical fires are class C fires. CO₂ or dry chemical extinguishers should be used. However, the actual burning product may be a class "A" item or items.
4. Class "D" burning materials include combustible metals such as magnesium and sodium. Special extinguishing agents, approved by recognized testing laboratories, are needed when working with these metals.

Using an incorrect extinguisher on a fire can be disastrous. An extinguishing agent containing water will spread a flammable liquid fire. A liquid extinguishing agent can conduct electrical current, causing shock if it is used on a live electrical circuit.

Use your judgment:

When you see smoke or fire you should use your own good judgment before you decide to extinguish the blaze. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is the fire limited in size and spread?



Weekly Safety Meeting

- Will you have an escape route if something goes wrong?
- Do you know the location of the nearest fire extinguisher?

If you are confident the fire is controllable and your safety is ensured, attempt to put it out. If the answer to any of these questions is *no*, evacuate the area immediately.

Do these things before you attempt to fight a fire with an extinguisher:

- See that everyone is safely exiting the building.
- Make sure someone has called the fire department.
- Determine if the fire is small -- no larger than a wastebasket.
- Plan an escape route.

Responding to fires:

Sound the fire alarm and call the local fire department immediately if a fire breaks out.

Once you have decided to extinguish the blaze, attempt to fight the fire only if,

- You know the type of combustible material burning;
- You have been trained to use the fire extinguisher correctly; and
- The fire is still in the incipient (beginning) stage.

If the fire gets too large or out of control, evacuate immediately.

Remember P-A-S-S:

- P - Pull. Pull the locking pin before using the fire extinguisher.
- A - Aim. Aim the fire extinguisher at the base of the fire, not at the flames or smoke.
- S - Squeeze. Squeeze the lever of the fire extinguisher to operate and discharge.
- S - Sweep. Sweep the fire extinguisher back and forth at the base of the fire to extinguish.

Most extinguishers will only allow about 10-seconds of extinguishing media. Prevention is the key when it comes to firefighting. Good housekeeping, proper storage procedures, and safe work practices will go a long way toward reducing the likelihood that a fire will destroy valuable property or injure either you or a fellow employee.

Fire destruction is one man's job...fire prevention is everybody's job!!



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Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests

