



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

# Weekly Safety Meeting

## Using Portable Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers can be an important tool in preventing a small fire from growing larger. However, they should not be used to combat large or rapidly spreading fires. The most important thing to do during a fire situation is to get yourself to safety and call the proper authorities to combat the fire. A building and the property inside are not worth putting yourself or anyone at risk trying to put a fire out with a fire extinguisher.

Use of fire extinguishers can come with many risks, so workers must be trained on how to safely use them to put out a fire.

It is important to understand the classes of fires and what fire extinguisher is used for each.

### Classes of Fires and Extinguishers Used for Each:

Class A - A fire extinguisher labeled with letter "A" is for use on Class A fires. Class A fires are fires that involve ordinary combustible materials such as cloth, wood, paper, rubber, and many plastics.

Class B - A fire extinguisher labeled with letter "B" is for use on Class B fires. Class B fires are fires that involve flammable and combustible liquids such as gasoline, alcohol, diesel oil, oil-based paints, lacquers, etc., and flammable gases.

Class C - A fire extinguisher labeled with letter "C" is for use on Class C fires. Class C fires are fires that involve energized electrical equipment.

Class D - A fire extinguisher labeled with letter "D" is for use on Class D fires. Class D fires are fires that involve combustible metals such as magnesium, titanium, and sodium.

Class K - A fire extinguisher labeled with letter "K" is for use on Class K fires. Class K fires are fires that involve vegetable oils, animal oils, or fats in cooking appliances. This is for commercial kitchens, including those found in restaurants, cafeterias, and caterers.

### Responding to Fires:

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

Follow your company's procedures on responding to fires.

But 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
- If the fire is still in the incipient (beginning) stage.

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

## Safety Rules for Using Fire Extinguishers:

Fighting a fire can be extremely dangerous. Above all else, you should never put your safety at risk to attempt to use a fire extinguisher. The following rules must be followed should you need to use a fire extinguisher:

- The fire must be small and in its early stages.
  - A fire extinguisher will not be able to put out a large blaze.
- You must have access to a non-threatened escape route. If the fire gets out of hand, you will need a way to escape. Do not attempt to fight a fire unless you have a safe way out. Be sure to identify a safe escape route before you even reach for an extinguisher!
- Only employees who have been trained on the use of fire extinguishers should attempt to use one.
- Ensure you have the right type of fire extinguisher for the specific type of fire you are trying to fight. Using the wrong fire extinguisher can make the fire much worse!
- Don't try to be a hero! There is no point in risking your life to save a building that can easily be rebuilt. Be mindful of your own safety at all times and be prepared to use your escape route.
- Inspect all of your fire extinguishers at least monthly.
  - Check to ensure they have not lost pressure, there is nothing blocking the nozzles, they are not damaged, and they have not been used.
  - Remember to mark the inspection tag after the inspection. OSHA fines can result from not doing this.

## PASS Method for Using a Fire Extinguisher:

Having the correct fire extinguisher is nice, but if you don't use it correctly it will be useless.

The PASS method is the most widely accepted and effective way to use a fire extinguisher. PASS stands for:

**P- Pull the pin:** Pull out the safety pin to release the handle.

**A- Aim the nozzle:** Point the nozzle at the base of the flames where the fuel is burning. If you aim high into the flames, the extinguisher will not be effective.

**S- Squeeze the handle:** While aiming the nozzle, squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent. It will come out with force so hold on tight!

**S- Sweep from side to side:** Sweep the nozzle back and forth to cover as much surface area as possible. Remember to continue aiming at the base of the flames.

In addition to the pass method, ensure that you are standing about 6-8 feet away from the fire when using an extinguisher.

If you stand too close you may spread the flames because of the force from the extinguisher.

If you are too far away, the extinguishing agent may not reach the burning material. Each extinguisher's labels will tell you the proper distance to stand to have the most effect on the fire.

Be sure to check the labels on the extinguishers in your workplace and follow all safety rules when fighting a fire.

**Remember:**

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 PREVENTION IS OUR INTENTION!!**

