



Weekly Safety Meeting

Types of Fire Extinguishers

Picture yourself in this situation: You are at work and you smell something burning. A short distance away, you see smoke. You run towards it and you find a small fire burning in a trash can.

1. Would you know what to do?
2. Do you know where the closest fire extinguisher is located?
3. Do you know what type of extinguisher is needed?
4. Is the fire too big for you to put out?
5. Are there people in the area that should be warned of the danger?

These are the types of questions that will be going through your mind should you ever find yourself in that situation.

However, remember that you will be stressed and that may impact your ability to react quickly.

This is why it's good practice to be prepared for a fire.

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.

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 in 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.

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

Classes of Fires and Extinguishers:

Class A: A fire extinguisher labeled with letter "A" is for use on Class A fires. Class A fires are those 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 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 involve energized electrical equipment.

Class D: A fire extinguisher labeled with letter “D” is for use on Class D fires. These involve combustible metals such as magnesium, titanium, or sodium.

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

Common Fire Extinguishers:

The most commonly used fire extinguisher is the red ABC extinguisher. This is the multipurpose dry chemical extinguisher. The ABC type is filled with monoammonium phosphate, a yellow powder that leaves a sticky residue that may be damaging to electrical appliances such as a computer. They can be used on A, B, or C type fires.

Another common extinguisher is a silver extinguisher that contains pressurized water. These extinguishers are used for Class A fires only. They should never be used on Class C or Class K fires. Adding water to an electrical or oil fire can cause more damage and injury. Only use water filled extinguishers for fires that you know are all Class A materials.

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) extinguishers are used for class B and C fires. These extinguishers are usually red too, like the ABC extinguishers, but have “CO₂” clearly marked on it. CO₂ extinguishers contain carbon dioxide, a non-flammable gas, and are highly pressurized. They don’t work very well on Class A fires because they may not be able to displace enough oxygen to put the fire out, causing it to re-ignite. These extinguishers do not leave a residue, which makes them ideal for electrical fires.

Summary:

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.

DON'T DELAY...GET OUT OF FIRE'S WAY!!

