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Weekly Safety Meeting

Portable Fire Extinguishers

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.

Employees who have not been trained on fire extinguisher use may not use a fire extinguisher in the workplace until they have been trained.

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

Classes of Fires and Fire Extinguishers:

Class A - Involves ordinary combustibles such as paper, wood, cloth, rubber or plastics. The common extinguishing medium is water or dry chemical.

Class B - Flammable liquids, grease, or gases are covered under this category. Common extinguishing media are foam, carbon dioxide, or dry chemical.

Class C - Live electrical fires are class C fires. CO^2 or dry chemical extinguishers should be used. However, the actual burning product may be class A items.

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.

Class K - Fires are those that involve oils and grease commonly found in commercial kitchens.

Protect Yourself:

When you notice a fire, sound the building's alarm and call the fire department. If you don't feel that you can handle the fire, leave immediately. Get everyone out of the building. Close doors behind you to slow the flames' spread, but don't lock any doors. Stay between fire and exit so you don't let the fire block your escape.

If the fire is small enough to put out with a portable extinguisher, you can do so swiftly by telling yourself to P.A.S.S. "PASS" is an easily remembered abbreviation describing the four-step process for most fire extinguishers.

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PASS Means:

P - Pull the pin. On some extinguishers, you release a latch or press a lever.

A - Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire.

S - Squeeze or press the handle; or you may have to press a button to discharge the extinguishing agent.

S - Sweep from side to side, aiming at the base of the fire until the flames appear to be out. Repeat if the fire reappears.

- Don't turn your back on a fire once you think it's out, because it could flare up again.
- Avoid breathing smoke, fumes, or extinguishing agent.
- Take care of the extinguisher and recharge it after each use.

Inspection, Maintenance, and Testing:

Inspection, maintenance, and testing are required for fire extinguishers. They must be fully charged and in operable condition at all times. When they are removed for service, equivalent equipment must be provided. An annual maintenance check and recharge by a trained person are mandatory. For optimum service, fire extinguishers require hydrostatic testing every 5 to 12 years by a trained person with suitable testing equipment and facilities. The annual service and periodic testing must be documented on the fire extinguisher service tag.

The code requires monthly fire extinguisher inspections. The extinguisher must be operable and free of dents, leaks, and other signs of damage. Pressure gauge arrows must be in the green “charged” zone. The date and initials of the inspector must be noted monthly on an extinguisher service tag.

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.

TO USE AN EXTINGUISHER…REMEMBER P-A-S-S!!

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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

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