

Fire Extinguishers

Inspections are performed annually. The tag on a fire extinguisher will indicate the date of the inspection. Verify that you have a current inspection tag on the fire extinguishers in your work area. If you don't, contact Facilities Management at 351-2446.

Make certain that the extinguisher has not been discharged and that it is full by checking the gauge located near the handle. The indicator should be in the green or middle of the gauge (for most gauge types).

Fire extinguishers should usually be mounted on the wall and near an exit.

The following are tips on How to Use a Fire Extinguisher:

- Before using an extinguisher, you must first remove the safety lock pin located on the handle of the extinguisher. Use a twist and pull motion to remove the pin.
- Keep the exit to your back. Hold the extinguisher upright (set on the ground if too heavy) and
 - o aim the extinguisher at the base of the fire
 - o use sweeping side to side motions
 - o slowly move closer using sweeping motions
- If the fire does not die down after you have emptied the contents of the extinguisher, exit the area

Basic Safety Principles for Portable Extinguisher Use

1. Do not attempt to fight a fire without sufficient facilities to combat it effectively
2. Remember every fire gives off toxic gases
3. Use extreme caution when an electrical appliance or wiring is involved in the fire (don't use water extinguishers for these types of fires)
4. Never allow the fire to get between you and your means of escape
5. If outdoors, always attack the fire with the wind to your back
6. Never turn away from the fire; back out, keeping a watchful eye on the extinguished fire
7. Most extinguisher contents are under pressure and need to be treated with respect

NOTE: Notify the Facilities Management Service Center (351-2446) or EHS (351-1149) when a fire extinguisher has been discharged, the seal has been removed, or you notice it needs inspected.

Fire Extinguisher Classification

Class A Fires - ordinary combustibles: The most common fire, called Class A, involves burning wood, cloth, paper and plastic. A water fire extinguisher can be used on Class A fires.

Class B Fires - flammable liquids: Class B fires involve flammable and combustible liquids. Burning liquids can flow rapidly and spread a fire. Water will usually not extinguish this type of fire. The burning liquid will float on the surface of the water and spread the fire further.

Class C Fires - electrical equipment: Fires in energized electrical equipment, called Class C, are especially dangerous to fight. In addition to the dangers associated with the fire, the potential for electrocution exists. Never attempt to put out a Class C fire with water.

Class D Fires - burning metals: Burning metals, called pyrophoric metals, such as magnesium and sodium are the toughest to put out. By their very nature, they are unresponsive to conventional fire extinguishers. Special extinguishing agents must be used or the fire may be smothered with dry sand.

Type of Fire Extinguishers

There are recommended fire extinguishers for each class of fire. The following describes some of the common types that can be used:

Class A type: Class A fire extinguishers can be used for ordinary combustibles. Water-based Class A fire extinguishers can include water, loaded stream, antifreeze, wetting agents, and aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) types. Never use these on electrical fires.

Class ABC -Multipurpose Dry Chemical: Most areas contain a variety of ordinary combustibles, solvents and electrical equipment. A Class ABC multipurpose dry chemical fire extinguisher can be used on any type A, B, or C class fires.

Class BC Carbon Dioxide: Unless substantial amounts of Class A materials are involved, a Class BC carbon dioxide (CO₂) fire extinguisher can be used. This extinguisher releases a cloud of carbon dioxide to displace air and cut off the fire's oxygen (caution: you need oxygen too!). It is not as effective outdoors in large open areas. Caution should be exercised with this extinguisher - contents are extremely cold upon release and can cause freeze burns (stay away from the nozzle).