

TOOLBOX TALK

Fire Extinguisher Use

WHY THIS MATTERS

When used properly, fire extinguishers can save lives and property by putting out small fires before they spread (OSHA). OSHA requires annual training for all workers who may use extinguishers. Using the wrong type on the wrong fire can make things far worse.

30%

Higher success rate with proper extinguisher placement

75 ft

Max travel distance to extinguisher (OSHA Class A)

100%

Proper extinguisher use saves lives and property

The PASS Technique — 4 Steps to Use an Extinguisher

Remember PASS — practice it so muscle memory takes over in an emergency:

1

P — PULL THE PIN

Pull the pin at the top of the extinguisher. This breaks the tamper seal and allows you to discharge.

2

A — AIM AT THE BASE OF THE FIRE

Aim the nozzle or hose at the BASE of the flames — not at the top. You must attack the fuel source.

3

S — SQUEEZE THE HANDLE

Squeeze the operating handle to release the extinguishing agent. Use firm, steady pressure.

4

S — SWEEP SIDE TO SIDE

Sweep the nozzle from side to side at the base of the fire. Move forward as the fire diminishes.

5

KNOW WHEN TO STOP — EVACUATE IF NEEDED

Only fight small fires. If the fire is larger than a trash can, spreading fast, or producing toxic smoke — GET OUT.

Before Using an Extinguisher — Quick Check

- Is the fire small enough to fight safely (no bigger than a trash can)?
- Do you have a clear escape route BEHIND you?
- Is the extinguisher the RIGHT TYPE for this fire?
- Has the fire alarm been pulled and 911 called?
- Have all other people evacuated the area?

Know the 5 Fire Classes — Use the Right Extinguisher

Class A — Ordinary Combustibles

Wood, paper, cloth, plastic. Use water, foam, or ABC dry chemical. Max travel distance: 75 ft.

Class B — Flammable Liquids

Gasoline, oil, solvents, paint. Use CO2, foam, or ABC dry chemical. Max travel distance: 50 ft.

Class C — Electrical Equipment

Wiring, motors, panels, tools. Use CO2, clean agent, or ABC dry chemical. NEVER use water.

Class D — Combustible Metals

Magnesium, titanium, sodium. Use Class D agent ONLY. Standard extinguishers make these fires worse.

Class K — Cooking Oils/Fats

Kitchen fires from deep fryers and cooking oil. Use wet chemical extinguisher. Max distance: 30 ft.

ABC Multipurpose

Most common on construction sites. Covers Classes A, B, and C. Check the label before every use.

Common Mistakes That Make Fires Worse

- ✗ Using water on a grease or electrical fire — water spreads grease fires and conducts electricity
- ✗ Aiming at the flames instead of the base — you must cut off the fuel, not chase the flames
- ✗ Fighting a fire with your back to a wall — always keep your escape route behind you
- ✗ Trying to fight a fire that's too big — extinguishers are for small fires only, evacuate if in doubt

Safety Tips to Remember

- ✓ Check extinguisher type BEFORE an emergency — read the label on the nearest unit today
- ✓ Monthly visual check: gauge in green, pin in place, no damage, access clear — takes 10 seconds
- ✓ Stand 6-8 feet from the fire — close enough to be effective, far enough to stay safe
- ✓ An empty extinguisher means evacuate — one unit lasts only 8-25 seconds. Don't stay to fight

Discussion Questions for Your Team

1. Where is the nearest fire extinguisher to your work area right now?
2. What type is it — can you read the label and identify its class?
3. Can everyone demonstrate the PASS technique?
4. Would you know when a fire is too big to fight with an extinguisher?
5. When was the last time you received hands-on fire extinguisher training?

TOOLBOX TALK SIGN-OFF

Date: _____ Supervisor: _____

Project: _____ Location: _____

Attendance sheet attached: [] Yes