



Fire Extinguisher Safety and Use

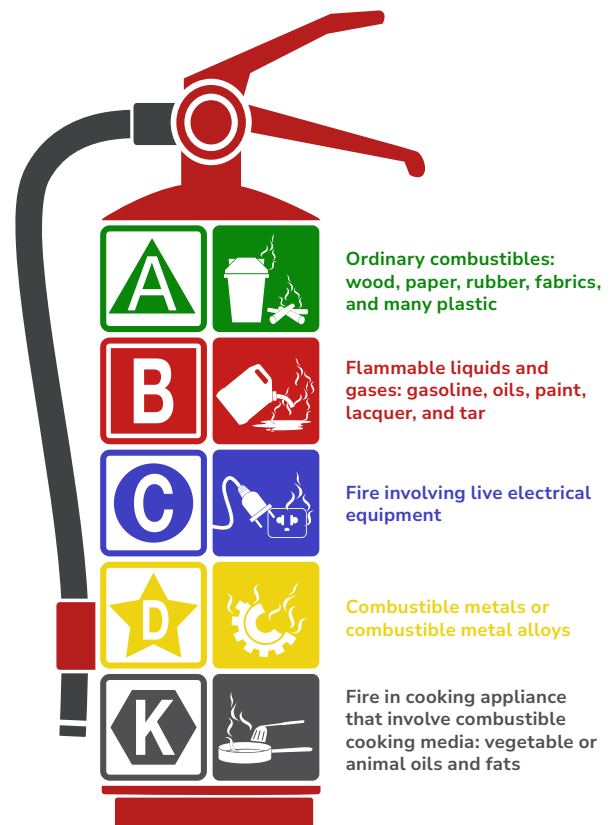
Fact: According to the National Fire Protection Association, 1,338,500 fires were reported to public fire departments in the United States during 2020. This shocking number resulted in an estimated 3,500 civilian deaths and \$21.9 billion in property damages.¹

A fire can be a devastating loss to anyone. A portable fire extinguisher, however, can help save lives and property by putting out small fires. Knowing the types of fire extinguishers, their maintenance and how to use them correctly is vital.

Types of Fires & Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are categorized by five different classes of fire. Each class may have several different types of fire extinguishers that could be used in the event of a fire. However, it is important to realize that one type of extinguisher is not appropriate to use in every situation. Check classification labels that indicate which class of fire an extinguisher is best used for.

- **Class A** fires involve mainly combustible materials such as wood, paper, cloth and trash
- **Class B** fires involve flammable liquids such as gasoline, oils and certain types of paints
- **Class C** fires involve energized electrical equipment such as appliances, motors and wiring
- **Class D** fires involve combustible metals such as titanium, sodium or magnesium
- **Class K** fires involve cooking oils such as grease, animal fats and vegetable fats



Inspection and Maintenance

Proper maintenance should be followed. Be sure that you consult the owner's guide or manual for your fire extinguisher. Here are some general tips:

- Make sure the fire extinguisher is not obstructed from view and that it is easily accessible
- A fire extinguisher may be installed securely on a hanger intended for the extinguisher, in a bracket featuring straps or bands supplied by the extinguisher manufacturer, in a listed bracket with straps or band approved for such purpose or in approved cabinets or wall recesses
- Verify that the fire extinguisher's pressure gauge shows that the extinguisher has adequate pressure
- A brief inspection of the fire extinguisher should take place at least once a month. A licensed fire protection company should inspect and maintain extinguishers at an interval of no more than a 1-year basis. (National Fire Protection Association)

How to Properly Use a Fire Extinguisher

First: Your main priorities are making sure everyone is out of the building and that someone has rang the fire alarm and called the fire department.

If you have the slightest doubt about your ability to fight a fire.... **EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY!** Know when to leave. Fire extinguishers are one element of a fire response plan, but the primary element is safe escape. Every business should have a fire escape plan and working smoke/fire alarms.

Most Fire Extinguishers Operate Using the Following P.A.S.S. Technique:

PULL... Pull the pin. This will also break the tamper seal.

AIM... Aim low, pointing the extinguisher nozzle (or its horn or hose) at the base of the fire.

**NOTE: Do not touch the plastic discharge horn on CO2 extinguishers as it gets extremely cold and may damage skin.*

SQUEEZE... Squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent.

SWEEP... Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire until it appears to be out. Watch the area. If the fire re-ignites, repeat steps 2 - 4.

¹ <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/US-Fire-Problem/Fire-loss-in-the-United-States#:~:text=Key%20findings,fire%20somewhere%20in%20the%20nation>



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