



FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Used properly, a portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or controlling it until the Fire Department arrives. Portable extinguishers, intended for the home, are not designed to fight large or spreading fires. There is no time to read directions during an emergency. Know how to use the extinguisher. The extinguisher must be within easy reach and in working order, fully charged. Most portable extinguishers discharge completely in as few as eight seconds.

There are three basic classes of fires. All fire extinguishers are labeled with standard symbols for the classes of fires they can put out. A red slash through any of the symbols tells you the extinguisher cannot be used on that class of fire.

A – Ordinary combustibles such as wood, cloth, paper, rubber and many more plastics.

B – Flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil, grease, tar, oil-based paint, lacquer and flammable gas.

C – Energized electrical equipment including wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breaks, machinery and appliance.

D – Combustible metals, such as magnesium and sodium. Fighting Class D fires requires specialized training.

K – Cooking oils used in commercial cooking equipment.

Many household fire extinguishers are multi-purpose A-B-C models, labeled for use on all three classes of fire. If you are ever faced with a Class A fire and you don't have an extinguisher with the "A" symbol, do not hesitate to use one with the "B:C" symbols. It is dangerous to use water or an extinguisher labeled only for Class A fires on a grease or electrical fire.

Extinguisher Sizes: Portable extinguishers are also rated for the size of fire they can handle. This rating is a number from 1 to 40 for Class A fires and 1 to 640 for Class B fires. The rating will appear on the label. The larger the number, the larger the fire the extinguisher can put out. Higher-rated models are often heavier. Make sure you can hold and operate the extinguisher before you buy it. Most household extinguishers are rated 1A or 2A and/or 5B, 10B or 20B. The "C" just indicates that you can use it on electrical fires.

Installation and Maintenance: Extinguishers should be installed in plain view above the reach of children near an escape route and away from stoves and heating appliances. Extinguishers require routine care. Read your operator's manual and ask your dealer how your extinguisher should be inspected and serviced. Over time, an extinguisher can lose pressure. Be sure to check it once a month. Rechargeable models must be serviced after every use. Disposable fire extinguishers can be used only once; they must be replaced after one use. Following manufacturer's instructions, check the pressure in your extinguishers once a month.

Remember the PASS-word: Stand 6 to 8 feet away from the fire and follow the four step PASS procedure. If the fire does not begin to go out immediately, leave the area at once.

Pull the pin: This unlocks the operating level and allows you to discharge the extinguisher. Some extinguishers have other devices that prevent inadvertent operations.

Aim low: Point the extinguisher nozzle or hose at the base of the fire.

Squeeze the lever below the handle: This discharges the extinguisher agent. Releasing the lever will stop the discharge. Some extinguishers have a button that you press.

Sweep from side to side: Moving carefully toward the fire, keep the extinguisher aimed at the base of the fire and sweep back and forth until the flames appear to be out. Watch the fire area. If the fire re-ignites, repeat the process.

Should you fight the fire? Before you begin to fight a fire, make sure everyone has left or is leaving the building. Make sure the Fire Department has been notified. Make sure the fire is confined to a small area and that it is not spreading beyond the immediate area. Be sure you have an unobstructed escape route to which the fire will not spread. Make sure that you have read the instructions and that you know how to use the extinguisher. It is reckless to fight a fire under any other circumstances. Instead, leave immediately and close off the area. Do not encourage children to use extinguishers.

If you are unsure about fighting a small fire - - don't. Leave the area and call for help!

More than 1/3 of all fire-related injuries occur while people are trying to fight fires. Small fire injuries are just as common and serious as large fire injuries. A man is twice as likely to be injured while fighting a fire because a man's first reaction is to try to put out the fire, while a woman tends to evacuate the area and then call for help.

Contact the Brainerd Fire Department at 218-828-2312 if you would like

Fire Extinguisher training for yourself or for your business

