

Fire Extinguishers

Types of Fires



Ordinary Combustibles

paper, wood, cloth, rubber and many plastics



Flammable Liquids

oils, gasoline, grease, solvents, lacquers and some paints



Energized Electrical Equipment

electrical sources which are still supplied with power



Cooking Oils

vegetable or animal oils and fats



Fire extinguishers display letters and/or symbols that indicate the types of fires they can effectively extinguish. If there is a slash through any of the letters and/or symbols, **do not** use the fire extinguisher on that type of fire.

Common Types of Fire Extinguishers



Multipurpose (ABC) Dry Chemical

Multipurpose (ABC) dry chemical extinguishers contain an ammonium phosphate base which can be used on all types of fires and is the least expensive of the extinguishing agents. The most common size is 2:A-10:B-C and weighs about five pounds.



Wet Chemical (K)

The Class K extinguisher is the ideal choice for use on cooking appliances including deep fat fryers and solid fuel cooking appliances. They contain a low PH potassium acetate base. The extinguishing agent discharges as a fine mist which helps prevent grease splash and fire reflash while cooling the appliance.



Clean Agents

Clean agent fire extinguishers do not leave a residue and are rated ABC or BC depending on size. Halon 1211 is a clean agent that is commonly found around computer systems and electronic equipment. Because of environmental concerns, fire extinguishing clean agents known as halocarbons are now the recommended alternative.



Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)

CO₂ extinguishers may be used on most mechanical and electrical fires. Because they are less effective on ordinary combustible (class A) fires, CO₂ fire extinguishers are usually only rated BC depending on the size of the extinguisher.



Pressurized Water

Pressurized water extinguishers are designed for use on ordinary combustible (class A) fires only. Use of water on fires involving flammable liquids and energized electrical equipment can be very dangerous.

To obtain fire extinguisher product safety information, visit the manufacturer's website and search for the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

Fire Extinguisher Operation

If you attempt to fight a small fire, remember the acronym **P.A.S.S.**

Pull the Pin

A small ring pin inserted through the handle of the fire extinguisher prevents accidental discharge. Hold extinguisher upright. Twist pin to break thin plastic strap, pull the pin out.

Aim the Extinguisher

Start back 8 to 10 feet. Point or aim the extinguisher at the base or front edge of the fire.

Squeeze the Handle

Squeeze the handle to discharge the fire extinguisher.

Sweep from Side to Side

Keep the extinguisher aimed at the base of the fire and sweep side to side, pushing the fire away from you.

Pull the pin.



Aim at base of fire.



Squeeze the handle.



Sweep side to side.



Safety Precautions

Keep in mind the following safety precautions if attempting to extinguish a small fire:

- Be sure you have the correct fire extinguisher for the type of fire and know how to use it.
- In commercial kitchens with built-in fire protection systems, the system should be activated before attempting to use a portable fire extinguisher.
- Maintain your exit. Leave yourself a way out in case the fire gets out of control.
- Have a back-up person standing by whenever possible in case assistance is needed.
- Stop and leave the area immediately if you experience any physical problems such as dizziness or difficulty breathing.
- Even if you think a fire is out, call the fire department to inspect the area. A fire may reignite or may still be smoldering where it cannot be seen.
- If a fire extinguisher has been used and is rechargeable, have it serviced before returning it to original location.
- To properly dispose of a fire extinguisher, visit Santa Clara County Household Hazardous Waste Program at www.HHW.org or call 408.299.7300.



Santa Clara County Fire Department

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