

Know the different types

There are five basic types of fire extinguishers. Each is used for a different type of fire. If a fire breaks out and you're not sure which type of extinguisher to use, don't panic. Call the fire department and get everyone out of the area. If you try to fight the fire with the wrong type of extinguisher, you may make it worse. Let the experts handle the fire.

A

For combustibles like wood, paper, cloth, rubber, cardboard and any plastics. Never use this type on a cooking fire or an electrical fire. The grease from a cooking fire will scatter the flame and the electricity in an electrical fire is easily conducted through water.

B

For flammable liquids such as gas, grease, oil, paint, tar and lacquer.

C

For electrical wiring and equipment like fuse boxes, circuit breakers, appliances and audiovisual equipment.

D

For combustible metals like magnesium, titanium, zirconium, lithium and sodium. If you do encounter a fire like this, be sure to let the firemen know so they can handle it properly.

ABC

For Type A, B or C fires. Type ABC extinguishers tend to be the most popular because of their multiple uses.



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FIRE

EXTINGUISHERS:

Helping you fight small fires



Fire Extinguishers

Do you have a fire extinguisher? Would you be able to find it when a fire started?

If you don't own a fire extinguisher, buy one. It's worth the small investment. Be sure to get one that's "listed" or "labeled" by an independent testing laboratory.

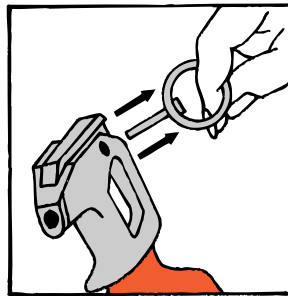
Where you place your fire extinguishers can make or break your fire evacuation plan and could save your life. The extinguisher must be within easy reach, close to an exit and away from potential fire hazards. You should probably have more than one extinguisher in your home. The kitchen, basement and garage are the most common choices, but be sure to use the correct type of extinguisher for each area.

Know what to do

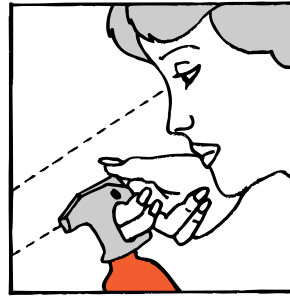
Before you decide to fight a fire, follow these three steps...

- Call the fire department;
- Make sure everyone has evacuated the building; and
- Be certain the fire doesn't block your escape route.

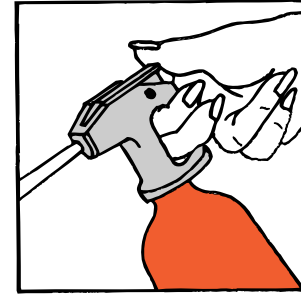
If the fire has spread beyond its immediate area, do not attempt to fight it. By this time, the fire is too large. Your extinguisher will only last 3 to 20 seconds and will only discharge 5 to 12 feet. Close off the area and leave the fire to the fire department.



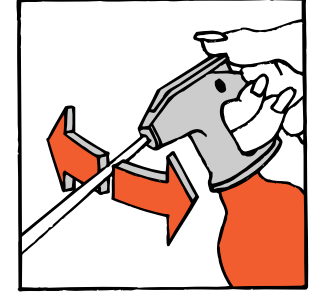
Pull the pin



Aim low



Squeeze the handle



Sweep from side to side

PASS over flames

If the fire is small and you have decided to stay and fight the fire, remember the word PASS.

Pull the pin. Some extinguishers require releasing a lock, latch or pressing a puncture lever.

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

Squeeze the handle. This releases the extinguishing agent.

Sweep from side to side. Keep the extinguisher aimed at the base of the fire and sweep back and forth until it appears to be out. Watch the fire area. If the fire breaks out again, repeat the process. If you are fighting a floor fire, sweep from the edge in. For wall fires, sweep from the bottom up.

Remember to stay low, away from heat and smoke.

Keeping up to date

Maintenance and inspection of your fire extinguisher will assure that the extinguisher will perform when a fire occurs. A quick check of each extinguisher should be done monthly to look for damage or tampering. A thorough examination should be done at least once each year. Go over these questions to insure a fully operative extinguisher.

- Is the extinguisher easily accessible and in its proper location?
- Are the operating instructions visible and facing outward?
- Is the extinguisher fully charged?
- Is there any corrosion, broken seals or damage?
- Are all connections between the hose and shell secure and free from obstruction?

If the extinguisher is reusable, be sure to have it recharged after every use. If the extinguisher is a disposable model, it can be used only once and then it must be replaced. Be sure you know what type of extinguisher you have so you can count on it to work when you need it.

Always remember, if you're not sure how to use a fire extinguisher, don't try. The time you waste could mean the difference between minor damage and major disaster. It's time you can't afford to waste once a fire has started—so sound the alarm and evacuate.