

Fire Extinguisher Tip Sheet

Q: "What type of fire extinguisher should I have at home?"

A: An A:B:C rated dry chemical extinguisher is best, with at least a 1A or 10B rating.

CLASSES OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:

Class A - Fires that involve ordinary combustibles (wood, paper, cloth)

Class B - Fires that involve flammable liquids (gasoline, oil, oil-based paint)

Class C - Fires that involve energized electrical equipment (wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers, machinery, appliances)

Class D - Combustible metals (magnesium, sodium)

(Some extinguishers are a combination class A,B & C)

Q: "Where is the best place to store a fire extinguisher?"

A: Install them wherever you have flammable items. These places will include your kitchen, garage, utility room and workshop. Install extinguishers upright and in plain view, usually near your escape route. Remember to keep them out of the reach of children

Q: "How do I use a fire extinguisher?"

A: Use the word PASS to remember how to use your fire extinguisher correctly.

- Pull the pin located below the handle.
- Aim low: Point the extinguisher hose at the base of the fire.
- Squeeze the lever above the handle, slowly and evenly to discharge it.
- Sweep from side to side. Move 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.

NOTE: An extinguisher may only last 10 seconds.

Q: "What maintenance is needed for my fire extinguisher?"

A: Follow these important steps to maintain your fire extinguisher

- Disposable extinguishers can only be used once.
- Check extinguisher's gauge (or green pin on top for small home models) to see if the extinguisher is still good.
- Install extinguishers upright and in plain view.
- For businesses, the extinguishers should be inspected and serviced annually. They should be marked with a tag. Refer to the yellow pages in a telephone book for companies who service fire extinguishers.
- For homes, the extinguisher should be inspected, too. If it's a multipurpose model, material can settle. Turn it upside down to loosen extinguishing agent.
- Look for obvious damage.
- Call the fire department if you have a specific question.
- See the manufacturer's instructions for details.

Q: "How do I dispose of my fire extinguisher?"

A: Look in the yellow pages of your telephone book under "Fire Extinguishers" for companies that dispose of fire extinguishers. In most cases disposable fire extinguishers can simply be thrown away.

Q: "Are there fire extinguisher training classes?"

A: Contact your local fire department. West Metro Fire Rescue offers training courses twice a year for a small fee. Participants must also bring their own fire extinguisher to the training class.

Q: "When should I use a fire extinguisher?"

A: First, you should always call the fire department. Then, under these conditions:

- If you have been properly trained on how to use and extinguisher.
- If the fire is very small (smaller than a trash can).
- If the fire is stationary (contained to one area and not spreading).
- If the fire is not blocking the exit routes.
- If the extinguisher is large enough to put out the fire.
- If the extinguisher rating matches the type of fire.
- If everyone else has left the area or is leaving the area.