

Fire Extinguishers

- Location, location, location! Having a fire extinguisher is one thing, having it handy in case of an emergency, is another.
- It is recommended to have at least one fire extinguisher on each floor of your home. Also, keep them in plain sight and no more than five feet above the floor.
- The most important places to have a fire extinguisher are in areas that are more susceptible to fire. These areas are the kitchen and the garage.
- Fire needs fuel, oxygen and heat in order to burn. In simple terms, fire extinguishers remove one of these elements by applying an agent that either cools the burning fuel, or removes or displaces the surrounding oxygen.
- There are three basic Classes of fires.

Class A refers to ordinary combustibles such as paper, cloth, wood, rubber and many plastics.

Class B refers to flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil, grease, tar, oil based paint, lacquer and flammable gas.

Class C refers to Energized electrical equipment including wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers and machinery or appliances.

It is very dangerous to use water or an extinguisher that is rated for Class A fires on a Class B or Class C fire.

Many household fire extinguishers are “multipurpose” A-B-C extinguishers labels for use on all three classes of fire

- Fire extinguishers are filled with water or a smothering material, such as CO₂. By pulling out the safety pin and depressing the lever at the top of the cylinder (the body of the extinguisher), this material is released by high amounts of pressure.

Choosing your Fire Extinguisher

- **It is vital to know what type of extinguisher you are using. Using the wrong type of extinguisher for the wrong type of fire can be life-threatening.**
- **Water Extinguishers**

Water extinguishers are filled with regular tap water and pressurized with oxygen. The best way to remove heat is to dump water on the fire but, depending on the type of fire, this is not always the best option. Never use a water extinguisher on grease fires, or electrical fires .The flames will spread and make the fire bigger!
- **Dry Chemical Extinguishers**

Dry chemical extinguishers are filled with either foam or powder, usually sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) or potassium bicarbonate, and pressurized with nitrogen. Baking soda is effective because it decomposes at 158 degrees Fahrenheit and releases carbon dioxide (which smothers oxygen) once it decomposes. Dry chemical extinguishers interrupt the chemical reaction of the fire by coating the fuel with a thin layer of powder or foam, separating the fuel from the surrounding oxygen.
- **Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) extinguishers**

CO₂ extinguishers contain carbon dioxide, a non-flammable gas, and are highly pressurized. The pressure is so great that it is not uncommon for bits of dry ice to shoot out. CO₂ is heavier than oxygen so these extinguishers work by displacing or taking away oxygen from the surrounding area. CO₂ is also very cold so it also works by cooling the fuel.
- Learn how and when to use a fire extinguisher. Do this before there is a fire . There is no time to read directions during an emergency .
- The extinguisher must be within reach and in good working order.
- The operator must have and maintain a clear escape route.
- The extinguisher must match the type of fire being fought.
- Although the temptation is to aim the extinguisher at the flames, the proper way to use the extinguisher is to aim it directly at the fuel.
- **Pull Pin, Point Nozzle, Press handle, Sweep at base of fire.**