Fire Extinguishers – Hospitality Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Fire extinguishers are a crucial line of defense against emergencies. Hotels, restaurants, and other venues have a responsibility to ensure guest safety, and readily available fire extinguishers can be the difference between a small incident and a disaster. The right extinguisher type needs to be placed throughout the establishment, considering the potential fire types in kitchens, workshops, and guest rooms.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Fire extinguishers are generally safe when used properly, but there are some potential dangers to be aware of:

- **Incorrect use:** Using the wrong type of extinguisher for a fire can make the situation worse. For example, using a water extinguisher on a grease fire can spread the flames.
- **Improper storage:** Fire extinguishers need to be stored in a cool, dry place where they are easily accessible. If they are exposed to extreme temperatures or corrosion, they may not function properly.
- **Accidental discharge:** Fire extinguishers can be accidentally discharged if they are not handled properly. This can be a respiratory irritant and can also obscure vision, making it difficult to evacuate a burning building.
- **Expellant gases:** Some types of fire extinguishers, such as carbon dioxide extinguishers, use expellant gases that can displace oxygen. If used in a confined space, this can lead to suffocation.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Protecting Yourself Around Fire Extinguishers:

Fire extinguishers can be lifesavers in an emergency, but only if used properly. In the heat of the moment, it’s crucial to remember basic safety protocols to ensure you’re not putting yourself or others at risk. Here’s how to stay safe with fire extinguishers:

- **Training is Key:** Before attempting to use a fire extinguisher, get proper training. This helps you identify extinguisher types, understand their limitations, and practice safe handling procedures.
- **Know When to Evacuate:** Fire extinguishers are for small, manageable fires. If the fire is large, spreading quickly, or you feel unsafe, prioritize evacuation. Alert others and get out immediately.

Using a Fire Extinguisher Correctly:

- **PASS Method:** Remember the acronym PASS for using an extinguisher:
  - **P**ull the pin. This disengages the safety mechanism.
  - **A**im the nozzle at the base of the fire, not the flames.
  - **S**queeze the lever to discharge the extinguishing agent.
  - **S**weep the nozzle from side to side to cover the fire thoroughly.
- **Right Extinguisher for the Right Fire**: Different fires require different extinguishers. Learn the fire types (e.g., electrical, grease, ordinary combustibles) and the class labels (A, B, C) on extinguishers to choose the right one. Misusing an extinguisher can worsen the fire.

Proper Storage and Discharge:

- Store extinguishers in a cool, dry, and easily accessible location. They should be clearly visible and free from

obstructions. Monthly visual inspections ensure they're ready for use.
- When discharging, maintain a safe distance from the fire. A short burst is enough initially, with additional bursts as needed.
- Even if partially used, an extinguisher needs professional servicing to ensure proper refilling and functionality.

Additional Safety Precautions:

- **Never tamper with an extinguisher.**
- **Don't block fire extinguisher exits.**
- **Be aware of the extinguisher's weight.** You might need to maneuver it quickly.
- **Consider your surroundings.** Exit routes should be clear in case you need to evacuate.

Hospitality locations like hotels and restaurants have a variety of fire hazards, so it's important to have the right type of fire extinguisher in the right place.

Here are the most common types needed:

- **Wet Chemical (Class K):** Kitchens are at high risk for grease fires. Wet chemical extinguishers are ideal for smothering these fires and preventing reignition.
- **ABC Dry Chemical:** These versatile extinguishers tackle Class A (ordinary combustibles like wood and paper), Class B (flammable liquids), and Class C (electrical fires). They're a good general-purpose option for hallways, offices, and laundry areas.
- **Water (Class A):** Water extinguishers are effective on ordinary combustibles but not appropriate for grease fires or electrical equipment. They might be suitable for some public areas or storage rooms.
- **Carbon Dioxide (Class B & C):** CO2 extinguishers are suitable for electrical fires and flammable liquids, but they displace oxygen and shouldn't be used in confined spaces. Consider them for server rooms or electrical panels, but prioritize evacuation for larger fires.

FINAL WORD

Remember, proper extinguisher selection and training are crucial for effective fire safety in hospitality settings. If unsure or overwhelmed, evacuate the area and call emergency services.