Fire Extinguishers Meeting Kit

Fire extinguishers are essential in every building no matter what kind of work takes place there. Fire extinguishers should be placed in spots that are easily accessible and visible in case of an emergency. For example, they can be placed along a regularly traversed pathway in the office or along a marked pathway in a warehouse.

HOW TO CHOOSE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER

- **The size of the facility**
- **The layout of the room –** The NFPA states that there should not be more than 75 feet between fire extinguishers.
- **The fire hazard level of the building**
- **If there are any flammable liquids around**
- **The presence of stairwells**

TYPES OF EXTINGUISHERS

- Class A Extinguishers are used on regular combustibles like wood and paper.
- Class B Extinguishers are for flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil, or grease.
- Class C Extinguishers are only used for energized electrical fires related to equipment.
- Class D Extinguishers are used for flammable metals like lithium or magnesium.
- Class K Extinguishers are required where there are combustible cooking materials in kitchens.

P.A.S.S. METHOD

The easiest way to remember how to use a fire extinguisher is to follow the P.A.S.S. method.

P- Pull. Pull the pin. Hold the extinguisher away and release the locking mechanism.

A- Aim. Aim the stream towards the base of the fire. Spraying the flames will not put the fire out.

S- Squeeze. Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly. Pulling the lever too fast may shoot the stream away from your target wasting the valuable firefighting agent.

S- Sweep. Sweep the nozzle side to side to combat the fire.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER LIMITATIONS

- A dry chemical fire extinguisher such as the common red “ABC” extinguishers will reach a distance between 5 and 20 feet.
- A 10lb to 20lb dry chemical fire extinguisher will last anywhere from 10 to 25 seconds.
- A rule of thumb is that for a fire extinguisher, the size of the fire should not be any larger than the size of a small trash can.

EMPLOYEE RESPONDERS TO A FIRE ALSO SHOULD BE TRAINED TO ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING PROTOCOL:

- If appropriate, sound the fire alarm or call the fire department immediately.
- Before approaching the fire, determine an evacuation route safe of flames, excessive heat and smoke. Do not allow this evacuation route to become blocked.
- If the extinguisher is empty and the fire is not out, evacuate immediately.
- If the fire grows beyond what can be safely handled, evacuate immediately.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER INSPECTION TIPS

- Extinguishers should be periodically checked every 30 days. There should be a formal check of all fire extinguishers onsite annually. These inspections should be documented.
- Ensure the pressure is okay when inspecting a fire extinguisher. There is a gauge that has an arrow that should be in the green portion of the gauge. If the arrow is in the red the fire extinguisher needs to be tagged out of service until recharged.
- Check to make sure the pin is still in place.

FINAL WORD

It is important to know more than just where the fire extinguishers are located in your work area. Make sure you know how to properly use them in case the time comes where you need to extinguish a fire.