Portable Fire Extinguishers Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

Fire extinguishers are among the most valuable tools in a fire safety and prevention plan, but only if they’re available at critical moments and you know how to use them safely and effectively.

What’s the Danger

THE ROLE OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS. Fire extinguishers are designed to extinguish a small fire that’s a danger to people, assets and property. Fire extinguishers are pressurized and can cause significant injury and even death. Causes of fire extinguisher failures.

1. Over pressurizing a fire extinguisher cylinder. Many fire extinguishers have a small gauge to show red for under pressurized or over pressurized and green for safe working pressures.
2. Cylinder failure, being that fire extinguishers aren’t a complete sealed unit and are made up of different components, damage or corrosion to any part can cause failure.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

FIRE EXTINGUISHER SAFETY PROTOCOL

1. When to Use an Extinguisher.

- The fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket
- The fire is not growing
- Everyone has exited the building
- The fire department has been called or is being called

- The room is not filled with smoke.

2. 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.

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

3. Fire Extinguisher Selection. Select a multi-purpose extinguisher (can be used on all types of fires) that is large enough to put out a small fire, but not so heavy as to be difficult to handle. This type of extinguisher will be a dry chemical agent with an A-B-C classification. Extinguishers installed shall have a minimum rating of 2-A.

4. Independent Testing Laboratory. Choose fire extinguisher with label of an independent testing laboratory.

5. Reading the Instructions. Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out.

6. Where to Install Extinguishers. Install fire extinguishers close to an exit and keep your back to a clear exit when you use the device so you can make an easy escape if the fire cannot be controlled.

7. Leaving the Extinguisher. Know when to go. Fire extinguishers are 1 element of a fire response plan, but the primary element is safe escape.

8. Safety Precautions before Using a Fire Extinguisher

- Evaluate the area and make sure the fire is small and contained. Do not attempt to use a fire extinguisher if the

fire is large or spreading, or if you do not know what is burning.

- Make sure you have an unobstructed escape route. Stay low and try not to breathe in heated smoke.
- Check the extinguisher for good condition. Do not try to use a fire extinguisher if the handle pin has been tampered with, the cylinder is damaged, or if the pressure gauge pointer is in the red ‘RECHARGE’ zone.
- Make sure you have the proper size and type of extinguisher for the fire at hand and that you are familiar with how to use it. If you do not know what is burning leave fire fighting for emergency responders.
- Proceed with the ‘PASS’ method only if you are confident with your abilities. Start from a safe distance of about 8 feet away and move towards the fire only if it appears the extinguisher agent is working to control the flames.

9. Know your fire extinguisher types

- Class A fires include wood, paper and textiles.
- Class B fires include flammable liquids.
- Class C fires include electrical equipment.
- Class D fires include metal powders and shavings.
- Class K fire extinguishers are required for commercial and restaurant kitchens.

BEST PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHER SAFETY PRACTICES

Training And Education for Workers

- Employers must provide an educational program to familiarize employees with the general principles of fire extinguisher use and the hazards involved with incipient stage fire fighting.
    - Provide this education when employees are first hired and once a year thereafter.
- Train employees (who have been designated to use fire fighting equipment in the emergency action plan) in the use of the equipment.

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. Often times the pin is bumped out of place leaving the chance of accidental discharge occurring.
- Look for rust on the container and ensure that the label is in good readable condition.

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.