

Safety Tip #5

Fire Extinguishers

We Rise and Shine



Select an extinguisher that meets your needs. The most popular extinguishers for home use are ABC dry powder extinguishers, one time use or rechargeable.

Type Extinguisher	Fire						Comments
	CLASS A Combustible materials (e.g. paper & wood)	CLASS B Flammable liquids (e.g. paint & petrol)	CLASS C Flammable gases (e.g. butane and methane)	CLASS D Flammable metals (e.g. lithium & potassium)	Electrical Electrical equipment (e.g. computers & generators)	CLASS F Deep fat fryers (e.g. chip pans)	
Water	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	Do not use on liquid or electric fires
Foam	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	Not suited to domestic use
Dry Powder	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	Can be used safely up to 1000 volts
CO2	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	Safe on both high and low voltage
Wet Chemical	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	Use on extremely high temperatures

- For the Kitchen, there are a number of small units available including fire blankets
- For Chimney fires, a dry powder can be used or one specifically for chimney fires.
- There are a number of new products on the market. Do a little research to see what best fits your needs. (Examples)



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Use fire extinguishers on small fires only.

Remember the word **PASS**:

Pull the pin.

Aim low at the base of the fire.

Squeeze the lever slowly.

Sweep the nozzle from side to side.



Help people decide when to use a fire extinguisher

Fire extinguishers can be helpful on a small fire. Consider providing a checklist to help people prepare to use a fire extinguisher on a potential fire.

For example:

- Have I alerted others in the building that there's a fire?
- Has someone called the fire department?
- Am I physically able to use a fire extinguisher?
- Is the fire small and contained in a single object (like a pan or a wastebasket)?
- Am I safe from the fire's toxic smoke?
- Do I have a clear escape route?

Use a fire extinguisher when all of these questions are answered "yes." If you're unsure about whether or not it's safe to use a fire extinguisher, and for all other situations, alert others, leave the building, and call 911 from a mobile or neighbor's phone. It is not recommended that children use fire extinguishers.

Educate on the importance of fire extinguisher maintenance

Remind citizens to check fire extinguishers for:

Easy access in an emergency

Be sure nothing is blocking or limiting your ability to reach it.

The recommended pressure level

Many extinguishers have gauges that show when pressure is too high or too low.

Working parts

Make sure the can, hoses and nozzles aren't damaged, dented, or rusted.

Cleanliness

Remove any dust, oil, or grease that might be on the outside of the extinguisher.

Guidelines and instructions

Some extinguishers need to be shaken monthly, others need to be pressure tested every few years.

Comments and Lessons Learned

- Trying to extinguish a fire can be extremely dangerous due to the toxic smoke and gases being released. Make sure not to overcommit, leaving yourself no escape route.
- Over time, a pressurized extinguisher can lose pressure that will reduce the effectiveness of the unit. Check regularly to see that the needle is in the green.
- Start extinguishment 8-10 feet back, squeeze and sweep at the base of the fire until extinguished. Do not stop too soon allowing for a flame-up.
- If trying to extinguish a grease fire on a stove top with a dry powder extinguisher, be careful, if you are too close to the pan, grease/oil could splash up onto the kitchen cabinets and extend the fire.
- Share this information with your family and friends.

Comments and lessons learned are from calls-for-service that retired Chief William Selzer attended or has researched.