

Fire Extinguisher Safety

Knowing how to use a fire extinguisher can help save lives when a fire happens. Review this guidance to prepare to use a fire extinguisher safely.

Types of Fire Extinguishers

The types of fire extinguishers are based on the fuel source of the fire.



- Type A (green symbol) : Ordinary combustibles (e.g., trash, wood, paper, cloth, and plastic)
- Type B (red symbol): Flammable liquids and gases (e.g., grease, oil, paint, and solvents)
- Type C (blue symbol): Energized electrical equipment (e.g., electrical panels and motor wiring)
- Type D (yellow symbol) : Combustible metals (e.g., magnesium and aluminum)
- Type K (black symbol) : Oils and fats (e.g., cooking oils, animal fats, and vegetable oils)

How to Use a Fire Extinguisher: PASS Method

- **PULL** the pin.
- **AIM** the nozzle at the fire's base.
- **SQUEEZE** the operating lever.
- **SWEEP** the nozzle side to side.

Fire Extinguisher Safety Tips

- When a fire breaks out, call 911 or activate a fire alarm to notify the fire department.
- Prepare by locating and reviewing the fire extinguishers' uses. Determine:
 - What type(s) of fire extinguishers are available?
 - What kinds of fuel sources are nearby?
- Always keep a clear exit path.
 - Always evaluate changing fire conditions.
 - Remember that fire conditions can change quickly.
- Make sure that the fire is small and localized.
 - A portable fire extinguisher is intended for small, localized fires that are in their early stages.
 - Do NOT fight a fire that is growing or spreading rapidly.
- Stay upwind from the fire.
 - If windy conditions exist, position yourself upwind from the fire to reduce smoke inhalation and increase the effectiveness of the fire extinguisher.
- Maintain a safe distance.
 - Stand at a safe distance from the fire while operating the extinguisher, usually about 6 to 8 feet away.

References

- Regulation: Standard Number 1910.57: Portable Fire Extinguishers
- University of Washington EHS: [Fire Extinguisher Safety](#)