



Fire Extinguishers – Your Small Fire Defense

www.ocfa.org

A fire extinguisher can be a lifesaver. Placed near an exit, in an easy-to-grab spot, it can put out a small fire or at least contain it until firefighters arrive. Fire extinguishers are not intended to fight large or spreading fires. They are used for a small, contained fire that is not spreading beyond its starting point.

All fire extinguishers are classified A, B, or C (or a combination of these) on the label to indicate which types of fires — ordinary combustibles, flammable liquids, or electrical—you can use them on. Many of the ones sold at home stores are classified A:B:C and fight all three types of fires. OCFA recommends a multi-purpose (ABC) fire extinguisher at home.

Class A: Ordinary combustibles such as wood, cloth, and paper.



Class B: Flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil, and oil-based paint.



Class C: Energized electrical equipment – including wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers, and appliances.



Regular maintenance and inspections of your extinguishers will ensure that they will operate effectively and safely. Use the following information as a guide:

- 🔧 Have each extinguisher in its designated place, clearly visible, and not blocked by anything which could interfere with access during an emergency.
- 🔧 Make sure the nameplate with operating instructions is legible and facing outward.

🔧 Turn the extinguisher upside down and hit it with your hand (A,B, C) to loosen the powder.

🔧 Is the pin and tamper seal intact? If not, have the extinguisher serviced or purchase a new one.

🔧 Check the pressure gauge to see if the extinguisher is fully charged (the needle should be in the green zone).

🔧 The extinguisher should be in good condition and showing no signs of physical damage, corrosion or leakage.



Remember
the PASS
method when
using a fire
extinguisher



P Pull the pin



A Aim the extinguisher or nozzle
at the base of the fire



S Squeeze the handle and release
the extinguishing agent



S Sweep the extinguisher from side
to side across the base of the fire
until it appears to be out

Use a fire extinguisher only if:

- 🔥 You have alerted other occupants and someone has called the fire department;
- 🔥 The fire is small and contained to a single object, such as a wastebasket;
- 🔥 You are safe from the toxic smoke produced by the fire;
- 🔥 You have a means of escape identified and the fire is not between you and the escape route; and
- 🔥 Your instincts tell you that it is safe to use an extinguisher.

Know when to go. Fire extinguishers are one element of a fire response plan, but the primary element is safe escape. Every household and building should have an escape plan and working smoke alarms. Make sure everyone knows how to get out in a hurry, where to meet outside, and how to call 9-1-1. Even if you think you've put out the fire on your own, don't cancel that emergency call. Leave it to the firefighters to decide if it's really out.

For more information you can visit,
www.ocfa.org or call (714) 573-6200.

OCFA Offers Fire Extinguisher Safety Classes

OCFA offers fire extinguisher training along with instruction from an Education Specialist. For more information or to schedule a class, contact the Community Relations and Education Services Section at (714) 573-6200.