



# Fire Extinguishers

A Factsheet on Choosing & Using Fire Extinguishers

A fire extinguisher is an absolute necessity in any home or office. While there's a good chance that the extinguisher will never be used to fight a fire, it could end up saving your property and even your life.

## Types of Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are rated by the type of fire they can put out. It is important to choose the proper fire extinguisher for each fire. Fire extinguishers are labeled with letters and/or pictures to indicate the type of fire on which the extinguisher is effective.

### Ordinary Combustibles Fire



**A**  
paper, wood, plastics, fabric, rubber, trash

### Flammable Liquids Fire



**B**  
gasoline, oil, grease, some paints and solvents

### Electrical Fire

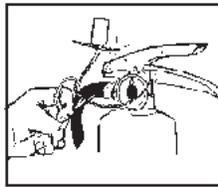


**C**  
energized electrical equipment; appliances, computers, circuit breakers, wiring

A combination **ABC Dry Chemical** extinguisher can be used on more than one type of fire, and is a good choice for home use.

## Remember the P.A.S.S. Word

There are four basic steps to using a fire extinguisher.

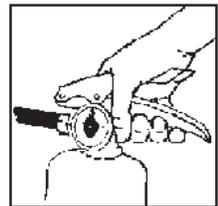


**Pull**  
Place the extinguisher on the floor. Hold it by the tank (pressure on the handle could pinch the pin). Pull the pin straight out.

### Aim

Start 10 feet back from the fire. Aim at the base of the fire.

### Squeeze



Squeeze the lever on the fire extinguisher.

### Sweep

Sweep from side to side, moving in slowly until the fire is out.

### Get Out



If the fire gets bigger, close the door and evacuate.

## Be Prepared

Training and practice are the best ways to prepare for emergencies. Make certain you know the P.A.S.S. system and understand how to safely use a fire extinguisher before you ever need to.

- Don't force yourself to fight a fire that makes you uncomfortable or puts you at risk.
- Always let someone know and make certain 911 has been called before using an extinguisher on a fire.
- Fire extinguishers are small quick fixes. If you are unable to put out the fire with one extinguisher, leave and close the door behind you.
- A fire involving any portion of building structure is too big for a portable fire extinguisher.
- While using a fire extinguisher stay low, the smoke is filled with carbon monoxide and many other toxic gases.
- Don't let the fire come between you and your exit. Keep your back to the exit and the fire in front of you.

## For More Information

**Contact:**  
**Seattle Fire Department**  
**Fire Prevention Division**  
**206-386-1450**  
[www.seattle.gov/fire](http://www.seattle.gov/fire)