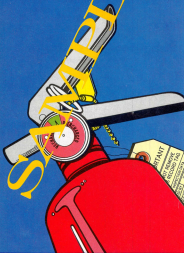


# Portable Fire Extinguishers

Fighting Small Fires



Call Toll-Free  
1-800-344-3555

## Extinguishers Have Limits

Used properly, a portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives.

Portable extinguishers for home use, however, are not intended to fight large or spreading fires. Even against small fires, they are useful under only certain conditions.

- The operator must know how to use the extinguisher. There is no time to read directions during an emergency.
- The extinguisher must be within easy reach and in working order, fully charged.
- The extinguisher must be kept near the exit, so the user has an escape route that will not be blocked by fire.
- The extinguisher must match the type of fire you are fighting. Extinguishers that contain water are unsuitable for use on grease or electrical fires.
- The extinguisher must be large enough to put out the fire. Most portable extinguishers discharge completely in as few as eight seconds.



## Choosing Your Extinguisher

Fire extinguishers are tested by independent testing laboratories. They will be labeled for the type of fire they are intended to extinguish.

**Classes of fires:** There are three basic classes of fires. All fire extinguishers are labeled using standard symbols for the classes of fires they can put out. A red slash through any of the symbols tells you the extinguisher cannot be used on that class of fire. A missing symbol tells you only that the extinguisher has not been tested for a given class on fire.

**Class A:** Ordinary combustibles such as wood, cloth, paper, rubber, and many plastics.



**Class B:** Flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil, grease, ice oil-based paint, lacquer, and flammable gas.



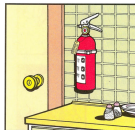
**Class C:** Energized electrical equipment including wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers, machinery, and appliances.



Many household fire extinguishers are "multipurpose" A-B-C models, labeled for use on all three classes of fire. If you are ever faced with a Class A fire and don't have an extinguisher with an "A" symbol, don't hesitate to use one with the "B:C" symbol.

**WARNING:** It is very dangerous to use water or an extinguisher labeled **only** for Class A fires on a grease or electrical fire. The "C" in a rating indicates that you can use the unit on electrical fires.

**Extinguisher sizes:** Portable extinguishers are also rated for the size of fire they can handle. Normally, an extinguisher that has a rating of 2-A:10-B:C on its label is recommended for each floor level. The larger the number, the larger the fire that the extinguisher can put out. Higher-rated models are often heavier. Make sure you can hold and operate the extinguisher before you buy.



## Installation/Maintenance

Extinguishers should be installed in plain view, above the reach of small children, near an escape route and away from stoves and heating appliances. Ask your local fire department for advice on the best locations.

Extinguishers require routine care. Read your operator's manual and ask your dealer how your extinguisher should be inspected and serviced. Rechargeable models must be serviced after every use. Disposable fire extinguishers can be used only once, and must be replaced after use. Following manufacturer's instructions, check the pressure in your extinguishers once a month.

## Remember the PASS-word

Keep your back to an exit and stand six to eight feet away from the fire. Follow the four-step PASS procedure. If the fire does not begin to go out immediately, leave the area at once.

***PULL the pin:*** This unlocks the operating lever and allows you to discharge the extinguisher. Some extinguishers may have other seals or tamper indicators.



***AIM low:*** Point the extinguisher nozzle (or hose) at the base of the fire.



***SQUEEZE the lever above the handle:*** This discharges the extinguishing agent. Releasing the lever will stop the discharge. (Some extinguishers have a button instead of a lever.)



***SWEEP from side to side:*** Moving carefully toward the fire, keep the extinguisher aimed at the base of the fire and sweep back and forth until the flames appear to be out. Watch the fire area. If the fire re-ignites, repeat the process.



Always be sure the fire department inspects the fire site, even if you think you've extinguished the fire.

## Should You Fight the Fire?

Before you begin to fight a fire:

- Make sure everyone has left, or is leaving, the building.
- Make sure the fire department has been called.



- Make sure the fire is confined to a small area and is not spreading.
- Be sure you have an unobstructed escape route to which the fire will not spread.
- Be sure you have read the instructions and that you know how to use the extinguisher.

It is reckless to fight a fire in any other circumstances. Instead, leave immediately and close off the area.

Detach here for specially printed sample.

## Tips for Fire Safety



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1-800-344-3555



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## 1. Install and Maintain Smoke Detectors



Smoke detectors warn you of a fire in time for you to escape. Install them on each level of your home and outside of each sleeping area. Test them every month, following the manufacturer's directions. Replace batteries once a year, or whenever a detector chirps to signal that its battery is low. Don't ever borrow detector batteries for other uses—a disabled smoke detector can't save your life! For complete home protection, consider installing automatic fire sprinklers in addition to your smoke detectors.

## 2. Plan and Practice to Escape

If fire breaks out in your home, you have to get out fast! With your family, plan two ways out of every room. Fire escape routes must not use elevators, which might take you right to the fire. Choose a meeting place outside where everyone will gather. Once you are out, stay out! At least twice a year, have the whole family practice the escape plan.



## 3. Smokers Need Watchers

Carelessly discarded cigarettes are the leading cause of fire deaths in the United States. Never smoke in bed

or when you are drowsy. Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers, and put water on butts before discarding them. Before going to bed or leaving home, check under and around sofa cushions for smoldering cigarettes.

## 4. Be Careful While Cooking

Never leave cooking unattended. Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles, and wear short or tight-fitting sleeves when you cook.



Keep the handles of your pots turned inward so the pots can't be knocked or pulled over. If grease catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames, then turn off the burner.

Never put foil or other metals in a microwave oven.

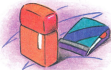
## 5. Space Heaters Need Space

Keep portable and space heaters at least 3 feet (1 meter) from anything that can burn. Never leave heaters on when you leave home or go to bed, and keep children and pets well away from them.



## 6. Matches and Lighters Are Tools

In the hands of a child, matches or lighters are deadly. Use child-resistant lighters, and store all matches and lighters up high where kids can't reach them, preferably in a locked cabinet. And teach your children from the start that matches and lighters are tools for adults, not toys for kids. If children find matches or lighters, they should tell a grownup immediately.



## 10. Crawl Low Under Smoke

**B** Smoke is dangerous! If you encounter smoke, use an alternate escape route. If you must exit through smoke, the cleanest air will be 12 to 24 inches (30 to 60 centimeters) above the floor. Crawl on your hands and knees to the nearest safe exit.



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