



Fire Extinguisher Info Sheet

Fire Classifications

There are four fire classifications, as defined by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Fire extinguishers should match the type of fire classification.

- Class A fire extinguishers will put out fires in ordinary combustibles, such as wood and paper.
- Class B fire extinguishers will put out fires involving flammable liquids, such as grease, gasoline or oil.
- Class C fire extinguishers are suitable for use on electrically energized fires.
- Class D fire extinguishers are designed for use on flammable metals fires.
- Many extinguishers available can be used on different types of fires and will be labeled with more than one classification (A-B, B-C or A-B-C).

Fire Extinguisher Types

The common types of fire extinguishers include the following:

- Dry chemical extinguishers – usually rated for multiple purpose use (A-B-C). They contain an extinguishing agent and use a compressed, non-flammable gas as a propellant. A residue is left behind after discharge of a dry chem extinguisher.
- Cleanguard extinguishers – usually rated for multiple purpose use (A-B-C). These types of extinguishers are often used to protect valuable electrical equipment since they leave no residue to clean up.
- Carbon dioxide extinguishers – usually rated for Class B and Class C fires. The carbon dioxide is stored as a compressed liquid in the extinguisher and as it expands, it cools the surrounding air. These extinguishers have a “horn” type discharge hose where the gas is expelled from the extinguisher.

Proper Use of Fire Extinguishers

- Use the PASS method when using a fire extinguisher:
 - P – Pull the pin out on the handle of the fire extinguisher
 - A – Aim at the base of the fire, not high at the flames
 - S – Squeeze the handle of the fire extinguisher
 - S – Sweep the base of the fire
- Only use an extinguisher if the fire alarm has been activated and the fire is small and confined
- Always fight a fire with your back toward an escape route
- Be sure your extinguisher matches the fire type and you are comfortable using the extinguisher
- If an extinguisher is discharged, notify Facilities Services to obtain a replacement