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