

SAFE WORK PRACTICE – FIRE EXTINGUISHER USE

PURPOSE

To provide a sense of the hazards involved in the use of fire extinguishers and to facilitate their use in a manner that minimizes risk of worker injury or damage to equipment and the environment.

PREREQUISITES

- The best way to fight fire is to prevent it. Take all pre-emptive precautions.
- Smoking is never allowed in work areas.
- Personnel must be familiar with the site’s emergency response plan and evacuation procedures, be adequately qualified and trained in the use of fire extinguishers and know the locations and types of extinguishers in their work area.
- CLASS A FIRES: materials like rags, paper, wood, trash.
- CLASS B FIRES: vapor-air mixtures from gasoline, oil, grease, paint, thinner.
- CLASS C FIRES: electrical or near electrical equipment (hazard of electric shock).
- CLASS D FIRES: combustible metals (i.e., sodium, magnesium).

BEFORE USE:

- Ensure that the fire alarm is activated, the building is being evacuated and 911 has been called.
- Decide at your discretion if the fire is safe to fight (i.e., confined to a small area, not spreading).
- Ensure that you have an unobstructed escape route at your back.
- Check the extinguisher type and size, whether it is fully charged and in working order, and whether you are adequately trained and physically able to operate it.

Use the acronym PASS:	
P	Pull the pin.
A	Aim low, pointing the extinguisher nozzle at the base of the fire (point upwind of the flames and away from others where possible).
S	Squeeze the handle to discharge the extinguishing agent (release to stop discharge).
S	Sweep from side to side while carefully moving toward the fire (never turn your back on the fire, even when it appears extinguished; watch the area and repeat this process in the event of re-ignition and have the fire department inspect the site).

DIRECTIVES:

- Do not attempt to or continue to fight fire where the fire is spreading or could block your escape route, if you are alone, or if there is heavy smoke or toxic gas present.
- Use extinguishing agents with care. They can damage equipment and materials, burn your skin or make breathing difficult.
- Smoke and char may contain toxins. Leave the clean-up to professionals.