



## Fire Extinguisher Use and Inspection Safety Talk

Fire extinguishers can be an important tool in preventing a small fire from growing larger. However, they should not be used to combat large or rapidly spreading fires. The most important thing to do during a fire is to get yourself to safety then call the proper authorities to combat the fire. A building and the property inside is not worth putting yourself or anyone at risk trying to put it out with a fire extinguisher. It is important to understand how to use a fire extinguisher and the limitations they have.

### P.A.S.S. Method

The easiest way to remember how to use a fire extinguisher is to follow the P.A.S.S. method. The PASS acronym was developed to allow people to remember the basic four steps to properly using a fire extinguisher.

**P- Pull.** Pull the pin. Hold the extinguisher away and release the locking mechanism.

**A- Aim.** Aim the stream towards the base of the fire. Spraying the flames will not put the fire out.

**S- Squeeze.** Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly. Pulling the lever too fast may shoot the stream from your target wasting the valuable firefighting agent.

**S- Sweep.** Sweep the nozzle side to side to combat the fire.

### Fire Extinguisher Limitations

- A dry chemical fire extinguisher such as the common red "ABC" extinguishers will reach a distance between 5 and 20 feet. It is important to be familiar with the models used in your work areas and the effective distance they can be used for.
- 101b to 201b dry chemical fire extinguisher will last anywhere from 10 to 25 seconds. Again, this depends on the model and weight you are using.
- Fire extinguishers are only designed to fight small fires. A rule of thumb a lot of professionals use is the size of the fire should not be any larger than the size of a small trash can.

### Fire Extinguisher Inspection Tips

- Extinguishers should be periodically checked every 30 days. There should be a formal check of all fire extinguishers onsite annually. These inspections should be documented.
- Ensure the pressure is okay when inspecting a fire extinguisher. There is a gauge that has an arrow that should be in the green portion of the gauge. If the arrow is in the red the fire extinguisher needs to be tagged out of service until recharged.
- Check to make sure the pin is still in place. Often times the pin is bumped out of place leaving the chance of accidental discharge occurring.



- Look for rust on the container and ensure that the label is in good readable condition.

## **Summary**

It is important to know more than just where the fire extinguishers are located in your work area. Make sure you know how to properly use them in case the time comes where you need to extinguish a fire. Always make sure the fire extinguishers in your work areas are in good condition through thorough inspections.