



Fire Extinguishers

A portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives; but portable extinguishers have limitations. Because fire grows and spreads so rapidly, the #1 priority for residents is to get out safely.

There are five classes of extinguishers:

Fire Class	Geometric Symbol	Pictogram	Intended Use	Mnemonic
A	Green Triangle		Ordinary solid combustibles	A for "Ash"
B	Red Square		Flammable liquids and gases	B for "Barrel"
C	Blue Circle		Energized electrical equipment	C for "Current"
D	Yellow Decagon (Star)		Combustible metals	D for "Dynamite"
K	Black Hexagon		Oils and fats	K for "Kitchen"

- **When to Use:** A portable fire extinguisher is used when the fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket, and is not growing; everyone has exited the building; the fire department has been called or is being called; and the room is not filled with smoke.
- To operate a fire extinguisher, remember the word **PASS**
 - **P**ull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you, and release the locking mechanism.
 - **A**im low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
 - **S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.
 - **S**weep the nozzle from side-to-side.
- For the home, select a multi-purpose extinguisher (can be used on all types of home fires) that is large enough to put out a small fire, but not so heavy as to be difficult to handle.
- Choose a fire extinguisher that carries the label of an independent testing laboratory.
- Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out.
- Install fire extinguishers close to an exit and keep your back to a clear exit when you use the device so you can make an easy escape if the fire cannot be controlled. If the room fills with smoke, leave immediately.
- Know when to go. Fire extinguishers are one element of a fire response plan, but the primary element is safe escape. Every household should have a [home fire escape plan](#) and working smoke alarms.