

Fire Extinguishers

How and When to use Them

Tips

- Use a portable fire extinguisher when the fire is confined to a small area, such as a trash can, stove or oven, and is not growing. But only after 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 **P.A.S.S.:**
 - **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.
- When purchasing a fire extinguisher, look for one that is tested by an independent testing laboratory and is labeled A-B-C as it can be used on most fires that would occur in your home. You want to be sure that the type of fire extinguisher you use will be effective at putting the fire out.
- Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out.
- Make sure you are physically able to handle a fire extinguisher. Some models are heavy and may be hard to operate and hold at the same time.
- 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 conditions worsen. 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 detectors.
- If you have any doubt about whether or not to fight a fire with an extinguisher, DON'T! Get out and stay out.