

FIRE PREVENTION

Fires, although rare, account for significant property damage among MCIT members. Additionally, fires can cause burns, smoke inhalation or panic leading to severe injury or death to people and animals. For these reasons fire prevention should be a priority at any fair.



FIRE PREVENTION



EGRESS

Egress refers to exit routes and exits within a facility. During a fire, blocked or locked exit doors or egress routes can pose serious risk. It is important to maintain free and easy access out of a building.

Ensure egress routes are:

- Free of objects on the ground or along the walls. This may include tables or other items on the floor.
- Sufficiently wide to accommodate multiple people and wheelchairs; 28 to 36 inches of clearance is recommended.
- Free of objects blocking the exit discharge. If items are blocking the door from the outside, then it cannot open.
- Well lit. Consider installing emergency lighting at exit doors and along egress routes signifying exits. Lit exits signs above doors can also be helpful when directing people out of buildings. If provided, these emergency lights and signs should be checked shortly before the fair to verify operation in the event of a power outage.
- Inspected regularly during the fair. Vendors, guests or others may set up displays, move items or otherwise obstruct egress routes.



Exit routes should be well marked and unblocked.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

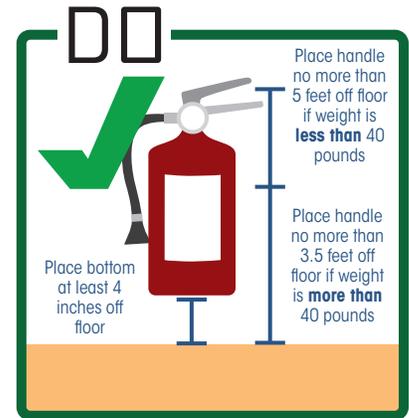
Portable fire extinguishers are used to help put out an incipient fire. This is the earliest stage of a fire—right after ignition—and can typically be extinguished with a single portable fire extinguisher. However, extinguishers are only of benefit when they are available, in good working condition and operated by someone who knows how to use them.



Fire extinguishers should be inspected periodically.

Ensure fire extinguishers:

- Have clear, unobstructed access and are not covered by blankets, jackets or other materials that obscure visibility.
- Have identifying labels or signage to clearly mark their location.
- Be mounted so that the base is at least 4 inches off the floor and the carrying handle is no higher than 5 feet. If fire extinguishers are greater than 40 pounds, the height of the carrying handle should be no greater than 3.5 feet.



All fire extinguishers require yearly service by a qualified third-party vendor. This ensures the equipment is fully charged and ready to use in the event of a fire. If the fairgrounds is used beyond the normal run of the fair, consideration should be given to inspecting extinguishers on a periodic basis in addition to the annual service.

These inspections should include verification of the extinguishing charge (arrow in green), a check to ensure that the seal has not been broken and the inspection tag is on the extinguisher, and confirmation that the extinguisher is located where it should be.

If volunteers are presumed to use fire extinguishers, they should be trained about when and how to use them. Training should include:

- Identifying when to try to extinguish a fire and the hazards involved.
- Sounding the fire alarm and calling the fire department if appropriate.
- Using the appropriate type of fire extinguisher for the type of fire, for example, a class K extinguisher should be used for a grease or oil fire because other types of extinguishers may create greater hazards.
- Identifying a safe evacuation path before approaching the fire. Individuals should not allow the fire, heat or smoke to come between them and their evacuation path.



- Discharging the extinguisher within its effective range using the P.A.S.S. technique (pull, aim, squeeze, sweep). See below for more information.
- Backing away from an extinguished fire in case it flames up again.
- Evacuating immediately if the extinguisher is empty and the fire is not out.
- Evacuating immediately if the fire progresses beyond the incipient stage.

P.A.S.S TECHNIQUE

It is important that users of fire extinguishers know how properly to use them. The acronym P.A.S.S. helps make remembering easier:

- Pull the pin. This will also break the tamper seal.
- Aim low, pointing the extinguisher nozzle at the base of the fire.
- Squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent.
- Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire until it appears to be out. Watch the area. If the fire re-ignites, repeat steps 2-4.

Agricultural societies should contact their local fire department with questions regarding fire extinguisher training.

All commercial kitchen areas using fats, greases or oils should have a type K fire extinguisher within 30 feet of the cooking equipment to supplement the suppression system already in place. Type K fire extinguishers should be used after the activation of the suppression system in the event of a re-flash or if a grease fire spreads beyond the cooking area. *For more information about fire prevention in cooking facilities, see Chapter 17, Cooking Facilities.*

FLAMMABLE STORAGE

Gasoline and other flammable chemicals are often stored on the fairgrounds. These should be stored away from emergency exits and possible ignition sources. Consider using flammable storage



Flammable materials storage cabinet

cabinets or special rooms with fire-rated walls or doors. Any gasoline should be stored in approved safety cans with self-closing lids and flame arrestors.

Further considerations regarding flammable storage:

- Posting signs or warnings, such as “No Smoking,” around the flammable storage cabinet or room to both raise awareness of flammable materials and discourage ignition sources from being placed or used nearby.
- A fire extinguisher should be placed near but not directly adjacent to flammable storage to allow for easy access in the event of a fire.
- Avoid storing oxidizers and flammables adjacent to each other. Oxidizers are known to contribute to the growth and intensity of fires.
- Flammables should not be stored near exit hallways, exit doors or stairs.
- Flammable cabinet and flammable storage room doors should remain closed and latched to prevent accidental opening. Door props should not be used in flammable storage rooms. See the fire doors section for more information.

Reducing the amount of combustibles and flammable substances stored at the fairgrounds also reduces the risk of fire and should be considered.

FIRE DOORS

Certain doors within a building may be fire rated. Fire-rated doors are designed to contain and slow the spread of fire throughout a building. This gives occupants time to escape and allows firefighters to respond and minimize property damage.



Fire door tag

Fire doors are typically located in flammable storage rooms, stairways, electrical rooms and other locations where fires may occur. Fire doors should be kept closed, not propped or held open. If open, they cannot contain fires effectively, and flames and noxious fumes may spread unhindered throughout a facility.