



A MINI TRAINING SESSION FOR INJURY PREVENTION

Quick Take on Safety

Fire Extinguisher Use

TRAINING OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- Overview: Covers the types of fire extinguishers, and when and how to use them.
- Purpose: Remind employees about how to fight incipient fires and when it may be appropriate to do so.
- Preparation:
 - Read and become familiar with this quick take. *Change as needed to reflect procedures and personnel in your department.*
 - Review the emergency action plan for fires for the organization (see notes).
 - Consider bringing a fire extinguisher to show the type and symbols.
- Handouts: Quick Review of Safety—Fire Extinguishers
- Notes: Review the emergency action plan for the organization in the event of a fire. If the plan states that all employees are expected to evacuate a building promptly and that they are not expected to fight fires, employees need not be trained about fire extinguisher use.

Certain employees may require fire extinguisher training, such as first responders, if they may be expected to put out fires. If employees are required to put out fires, they must be trained initially and at least annually thereafter. Consider consulting with the local fire department or vendors to conduct live trainings with real fires and fire extinguishers. This training is designed as a reminder or refresher to supplement such training.

For more information, please review the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) Standard 1910.157 Portable Fire Extinguishers.

Fire Hazards

According to state fire marshal reports, Minnesota typically has more than 13,000 fires a year with greater than 36 deaths annually. These fires also tend to cost well over \$200 million in property damage every year.

One method to reduce injuries, deaths and property damage is to use fire extinguishers on incipient stage fires. So listen carefully, your health and safety are important to us; we don't want you to get hurt.

Fire Extinguisher Types

Fire extinguishers are not all the same. They have different classes, depending on what is burning. Each fire extinguisher should have a label that identifies the class of extinguisher and a symbol that shows the type of fire it can extinguish safely.

[*Instructor prompt:* Ask employees to follow along on the chart in their handout as you review it]

Class	Type of Fire	Extinguisher Identification	Symbol
A	Ordinary combustibles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper Wood Plastics 		
B	Flammable liquids: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gasoline Paint Tar 		
C	Electrical fires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live electrical equipment 		
D	Combustible metals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Magnesium Sodium Potassium 		
K	Oils and fats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetable, animal oils or fats Cooking 		

There are also combination extinguishers with ABC being the most common that is suitable for class A, B and C fires. Using the wrong class of extinguisher on a fire can not only be ineffective, it can also be dangerous, such as if a foam or water type A extinguishers is used on a type C electrical fire or a type K cooking oil fire. In these situations, it can increase the risk of electrocution or actually spread the fire over a larger area.

Assess the Risk

Before deciding to use a fire extinguisher, you should conduct a short risk assessment to determine if the fire is safe to fight. Ask yourself:

- Is the fire small enough for the extinguisher to put it out?
- Is there a clear escape path behind me that is free of smoke, heat and fire?
- Is the visibility OK, and is it easy to breathe?

If the answer to any of these questions is “no” or if there is any doubt about your safety, you should evacuate immediately and call the fire department.

PASS Technique

If you have decided that the fire is safe to fight, follow the pass technique. [*Instructor Prompt:* Follow along with the extinguisher, in either a mock fashion or during a live demonstration.]

- P: Pull the pin, this breaks the tamper seal and allows you to activate the extinguisher.
- A: Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire.
- S: Squeeze the trigger while keeping the nozzle aimed at the base of the fire.
- S: Sweep the nozzle side to side at the base of the fire until extinguished.

Continue to watch the fire. If it reignites, repeat steps 2 through 4. If the fire extinguisher empties and the fire is still active or if there is any doubt in your mind about your safety, evacuate immediately.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where is the nearest fire extinguisher?
- What types of extinguishers do we have in our facility?
- What can we do to prevent a fire from starting in the first place?



Fire Extinguisher Use Session Planning and Review

Trainer

Training
Date

Department(s)

TRAINING GOALS

- Employees understand the risks of fires and the expectations in the event of a fire.
- Employees know the different types of fire extinguishers.
- Employees can quickly assess a fire to determine if it is safe to fight.
- Employees understand the PASS technique and can fight a fire.

RESOURCES

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), “Emergency Standards: Portable Fire Extinguishers eTool,” [OSHA.gov](https://www.osha.gov)
- Minnesota State Fire Marshal Department of Public Safety, “Reports and Statistics: Fire in Minnesota,” [DPS.mn.gov](https://www.dps.mn.gov).

REVIEW

Did the training meet the stated goals?

How can the training be improved?

TRAINER COMMENTS

