CrewSigned

Fire Extinguisher Safety Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

A fire extinguisher can stop a small fire before it becomes a big one. But it only works if it is the right kind, it is charged, it is where you can reach it, and you know how to use it. Today we will go over all four.

Extinguishers are rated by the kind of fire they fight. Class A is ordinary stuff like wood, paper, cardboard and cloth. Class B is flammable liquids and gases like gasoline, oil, paint and propane. Class C is energized electrical equipment. Most of the extinguishers on our sites are ABC, which covers all three. Never use water on a grease, fuel or electrical fire.

On a construction site, there has to be an extinguisher rated at least 2A for every 3,000 square feet of building, and you should never have to walk more than 100 feet to reach one. Where more than five gallons of flammable liquid is being used, a Class B unit has to be within 50 feet. Do not hide them behind material or move them without telling anyone.

To use one, remember PASS. Pull the pin. Aim low, at the base of the fire, not at the flames. Squeeze the handle. Sweep side to side across the base until the fire is out. Most extinguishers empty in about ten to twenty seconds, so you do not get a second chance. Back away once the fire is out and watch it, because it can flare up again.

Before you fight a fire, make sure someone has called 911 and the alarm is going. Keep your back to a clear exit. Only fight a fire that is small and contained, like a trash can, not one that is spreading across a wall or ceiling. If the room is filling with smoke, if the extinguisher is empty and the fire is still going, or if you have any doubt, leave and close the door behind you.

Extinguishers get a visual check every month and a full maintenance check every year. Look at the gauge, the pin and seal, the hose, and the tag. If one has been used even a little, it goes back for recharge. Tell me so we can swap it today.

Discussion questions

1. Where is the closest extinguisher to where you work, and what class is it?
2. When was it last checked, and is the gauge in the green?
3. What would make you decide to leave a fire instead of fighting it?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1910.157, Portable fire extinguishers
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.157

SOURCES

OSHA Evacuation Plans and Procedures eTool: Portable Fire Extinguishers: https://www.osha.gov/etools/evacuation-plans-procedures/emergency-standards/portable-extinguishers
OSHA Evacuation Plans and Procedures eTool: Fire Extinguisher Use: https://www.osha.gov/etools/evacuation-plans-procedures/emergency-standards/portable-extinguishers/use
29 CFR 1926.150, Fire protection: https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.150

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Fire Extinguisher Safety Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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