

Using Fire Extinguishers

When a fire erupts, you have a few seconds to make a life-or-death decision. Knowing what to do can save your life.

Take the utmost precaution. If you doubt the seriousness of a fire, sound the alarm and evacuate the premises. Don't hesitate. Use the appropriate fire extinguisher to put out only the smallest fires.

TRUE STORY

Workers at an agricultural maintenance shop had been storing oily rags in a wooden box behind the bench grinder. A spark from the grinder ignited the oily rags. The workers frantically tried to extinguish the fire by pouring liquid on the flames. Unfortunately, the container marked "**WATER FOR RADIATORS**" contained gasoline.

The fire intensified!

Thinking quickly, the shop supervisor ordered everyone out of the shop and assigned an employee to call the fire department. The supervisor then quickly grabbed the appropriate fire extinguisher and put out the flames.

What could have prevented this accident?

- Store all combustible materials in appropriate containers a safe distance from sparks or open flames.
- Store gasoline, diesel, and other flammable liquids in approved storage containers.

Choose the Right Fire Extinguisher

Every fire extinguisher is rated for the type of fire it can put out. Before you use an extinguisher, check its rating to see if it can extinguish the fire. This information should be clearly listed on the fire extinguisher.

The four basic types of fire extinguishers ratings are:

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Fuel</u>
A	Wood, paper, cloth, rubber, etc.
B	Flammable liquids like oil, grease, gasoline, diesel, and paint.
C	Electrical fires.
D	Combustible metals.

If you use the wrong type of extinguisher, the fire may continue to burn and, in some cases, can worsen.

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EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer:

- Provide proper containers to store flammable materials and instruct employees on safe storing procedures.
- Confirm that the proper fire extinguishers are located throughout the building and premises, and inspect them regularly.
- Train employees to use the appropriate fire extinguisher and instruct them to try to fight only small fires.
- Train employees how to evacuate the building.

Employee:

- Understand the proper way to evacuate a building in case of fire.
- Know how to use the appropriate fire extinguishers. Learn where fire extinguishers are located at your worksite and what rating they carry.
- Understand the procedures to store flammable materials and report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor immediately.
- Never hesitate if you doubt the seriousness of a fire. Sound the alarm and evacuate the premises.

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