

Risk Insights

Advice for you and your business

Portable Fire Extinguishers



A fire can burn out of control in just 30 seconds and destroy everything you own. Fire extinguishers should be a vital component of your loss prevention program. Choosing the right classification, size and location is critical.

Fire extinguishers have three main classifications or ratings that indicate the type of fire they will extinguish. All ratings are shown on the extinguisher faceplate. Some extinguishers are marked with multiple ratings such as BC, ABC, and K. These extinguishers are capable of putting out more than one class of fire.

☉ **To operate an extinguisher, remember the acronym P.A.S.S.**

- **P - Pull** the pin
- **A - Aim** the extinguisher nozzle at the base of the flames
- **S - Squeeze** the trigger while holding the extinguisher upright
- **S - Sweep** the extinguisher from side to side, covering the area of the fire with the extinguishing agent

☉ **Some key points to remember about fire extinguishers:**

- Fire extinguishers should be selected based on the class of fire you need to extinguish (**see chart on page 2**), the potential size of the fire and the maximum floor area per extinguisher.
- Fire extinguishers should be located along normal paths of travel, mounted on a wall and not obstructed from view.
- Fire extinguisher signs should be placed in clear view above the extinguisher.
- Fire extinguishers should be kept fully charged and in their designated places.

*Fire extinguishers should be **inspected and serviced annually** by the contractor, with a **tag attached showing the contractor's name and service date.***

Portable Fire Extinguishers *(continued)*

- Employees should receive regular training on fire extinguisher use.
- A qualified fire extinguisher service contractor should be consulted regarding selection, placement and servicing of your fire extinguishers.
- Fire extinguishers should be inspected and serviced annually by the contractor, with a tag attached showing the contractor's name and service date.
- Documented monthly visual inspections should be conducted by employees to ensure that each extinguisher is in its designated place, that it has not been actuated or tampered with, and that there is no obvious physical damage or condition to prevent its operation.

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Classes of Fire	Type of Fires	Picture Symbol
A	Wood, paper, cloth, trash & other ordinary materials	
B	Gasoline, oil, paint and other flammable liquids	
C	Live electrical equipment	
D	Combustible metals and combustible metal alloys	
K	Cooking media (vegetable or animal oils and fats)	