

eTools

Evacuation Plans and Procedures eTool

Portable Fire Extinguishers » Fire Extinguisher Use

If fire extinguishers are available for employee use, it is the employer's responsibility to educate employees on the principles and practices of using a fire extinguisher and the hazards associated with fighting small or developing fires. [29 CFR 1910.157(g)(1)] This education must be provided annually and when a new employee is first hired. [29 CFR 1910.157(g)(2)]

Employees who have been designated to use fire extinguishers as part of the emergency action plan, must be trained on how to use the fire extinguishers appropriately in the workplace. [29 CFR 1910.157(g)(3)] This training is a specialized form of education that focuses on developing or improving skills and it must be provided annually and when employees are first assigned these duties. [29 CFR 1910.157(g)(4)]

Using a Fire Extinguisher

The following steps should be followed when responding to incipient stage fire:

- Sound the fire alarm and call the fire department, if appropriate.
- Identify a safe evacuation path before approaching the fire. Do not allow the fire, heat, or smoke to come between you and your evacuation path.
- Select the appropriate type of fire extinguisher.
- Discharge the extinguisher within its effective range using the P.A.S.S. technique (pull, aim, squeeze, sweep).
- Back away from an extinguished fire in case it flames up again.
- Evacuate immediately if the extinguisher is empty and the fire is not out.
- Evacuate immediately if the fire progresses beyond the incipient stage.

Most fire extinguishers operate using the following P.A.S.S. technique:

1. **PULL...** Pull the pin. This will also break the tamper seal.
2. **AIM...** Aim low, pointing the extinguisher nozzle (or its horn or hose) at the base of the fire.
NOTE: Do not touch the plastic discharge horn on CO2 extinguishers, it gets very cold and may damage skin.
3. **SQUEEZE...** Squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent.
4. **SWEEP...** 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.

If you have the slightest doubt about your ability to fight a fire....EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY!

