

Household Fire Extinguishers

In addition to working smoke detectors, every household should have UL Listed fire extinguishers strategically placed in rooms such as the kitchen, garage or workshop.

Don't just hang your extinguisher on the wall!

Plan ahead, read the instruction manual and know your extinguisher's capabilities before trying to fight a fire. Portable fire extinguishers are useful for putting out small fires, but recognize your limits and the limits of the extinguisher.

Using the wrong type of extinguisher on a fire can actually make it spread so it's important to plan ahead when purchasing and placing fire extinguishers.

There are four types of household extinguishers:

The manufacturer's use and care booklet provides guidance on the type and size of fire with which your extinguisher may be used. The booklet also provides tips on how to properly use and maintain your extinguisher.

Extinguisher rating Intended use

Type A For use on fires involving combustible materials such as wood, cloth and paper.

Type B For use on flammable liquid fires, including kitchen grease. Never use water on this type of fire!

Type C For use in fires involving energized electrical equipment.

Type ABC Works on all three types of fires listed above.

Here's some basic rules to keep in mind when dealing with household fire extinguishers:

- If a fire breaks out, your first step is to call the fire department and get everyone out of the house. If the fire is not spreading and is confined to a small area, use the appropriate type extinguisher for the fire. Know both your limits and the fire extinguisher's limits.

- Periodically inspect your extinguishers to determine if they need to be recharged or replaced. Extinguishers need to be recharged or replaced after each use -- even if you haven't used all the extinguishing agent.

- When using a portable extinguisher, keep your back to an unobstructed exit that is free from fire.

Check the manufacturer's instructions for operating guidelines, including proper distance between the extinguisher and fire. Always aim at the base of the fire.

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