



The ABC's (and sometimes D's) of Fire Extinguishers

Although there are many types of fires and extinguishing mediums, most fire extinguishers in a school setting are ABC fire extinguishers. These extinguishers use a dry chemical within a pressurized container to extinguish fires. ABC fire extinguishers can be used on most fires found in a school setting including normal paper, trash, flammable liquids and electrical fires. An ABC extinguisher should not be used on heavy metal (type D) fires. A type K extinguisher may work better on grease fires.

Being prepared in case of a fire is the most critical aspect. This means being familiar with the type and location of extinguishers, performing regular monthly inspections and being able to properly operate an extinguisher.

As per NFPA codes, fire extinguishers must be serviced annually by professionals and inspected monthly by the end user. Monthly inspections should look for the following issues:

- Lock seal and pin are intact
- Extinguisher is properly pressurized
- Inspection tag is intact and current
- Nozzle is attached and unobstructed
- Check the date stamp (if present) on the extinguisher body to ensure it has not expired

To operate an ABC fire extinguisher remember the following acronym: PASS

- P Pull the pin
- A Aim at the base of the fire
- S Squeeze the release lever
- S Sweep back and forth across the fire

Also keep in mind staying upwind of the fire, only attempt to extinguish small fires of known materials, never turn your back on the fire and always report all fires to the fire department.

If in doubt, evacuate the area immediately and call for help.



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