



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Using Portable Fire Extinguishers



In the event of a fire, the correct use of a portable fire extinguisher could mean the difference between suffering a minor loss or a major one. Portable fire extinguishers, if used properly, can make that difference. But there are several things to consider in using fire extinguishers. For instance, you must know the class of fire involved and the correct type of fire extinguisher to use.

CLASSES OF FIRES AND FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:

- **Class A** - Involves ordinary combustibles such as paper, wood, cloth, rubber or plastics. The common extinguishing media is water or dry chemical.
- **Class B** - Flammable liquids, grease or gases are covered under this category. Common extinguishing media are foam, carbon dioxide or dry chemical.
- **Class C** - Live electrical fires are class C fires. CO2 or dry chemical extinguishers should be used. However, the actual burning product may be class A items.
- **Class D** - Burning materials include combustible metals such as magnesium and sodium. Special extinguishing agents, approved by recognized testing laboratories, are needed when working with these metals.

RESPONDING TO FIRES:

- Sound the fire alarm and call the local fire department immediately if a fire breaks out. Attempt to fight the fire only if, (1) you know the type of combustible material burning, (2) you have been trained to use the fire extinguisher correctly, and (3) if the fire is still in the beginning stage. If the fire gets too large or out of control, evacuate immediately.

REMEMBER P-A-S-S WHEN USING AN EXTINGUISHER:

- **P - Pull.** Pull the locking pin.
- **A - Aim.** Aim the fire extinguisher at the base of the fire. Not at the flames or smoke.
- **S - Squeeze.** Squeeze the lever of the fire extinguisher.
- **S - Sweep.** Sweep the fire extinguisher back and forth at the base of the fire.

Prevention is the key when it comes to firefighting. Good housekeeping, proper storage procedures and safe work practices will go a long way toward reducing the likelihood that a fire will destroy valuable property or injure either you or a fellow employee.

Questions:

- What is the policy on sounding an alarm and contacting the fire department?
- What kinds of flammables are most likely to create a fire danger at your jobsite?
- What type of fire extinguisher should be used on those flammables or combustibles?