

# Proper Use of Fire Extinguishers

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

The most important thing to remember about fire extinguishers is that you must use the correct type for the kind of fire.

There are several types of fires:

1. Class A, combustibles, such as wood, paper or cloth.
2. Class B, flammable liquids.
3. Class C, electrical.

There are several types of fire extinguishers: foam, carbon dioxide, soda acid, pump tank, gas cartridge, multi-purpose dry chemical and ordinary dry chemical. Most extinguishers have labels that list the types of fires for which they can be used.

The most common extinguisher in hospitals is the multipurpose dry chemical type. It can be used for any class of fire. However, if the tag on the extinguisher is not labeled ABC, you must know the type of fire for which that particular extinguisher can be used. The following table shows the types of fires and the types of extinguishers that can be used for each.

### CLASS A FIRES:

1. Foam
2. Soda Acid Pump acid Pump Tank
3. Plain Water (contains plain water) Gas Cartridge (water expelled by carbon dioxide gas)

### CLASS B FIRES:

1. Foam
2. Carbon Dioxide
3. Multipurpose Dry Chemical
4. Ordinary Dry Chemical

### CLASS C FIRES:

1. Carbon Dioxide

2. Multipurpose Dry Chemical
3. Ordinary Dry Chemical

These tips on using the various types of fire extinguishers may help:

- Foam should not be sprayed directly into flames, but should be allowed to fall lightly on the fire.
- Carbon dioxide should be directed at the edge of the flames, and then moved gradually forward and upward.
- Streams from soda acid or gas cartridge extinguishers should be directed at the base of the flame.
- When using pump tanks, place a foot on the foot rest and aim at the base of the flames.

Dry chemical extinguishers should be directed at the base of the fire. Again, it is important to emphasize the necessity of using the correct type of extinguisher for the fire at hand. You should not use a water type extinguisher for a flammable liquid fire because this would cause the fire to spread; and you would not use this type of extinguisher on an electrical fire because this would expose you to a serious or fatal shock.

Note to Discussion Leader:

At this point, employees should be shown how to handle extinguishers properly (in an upright position) and how to release the pins. The table discussed earlier in this talk may be reproduced and given to each employee, or a copy can be posted in each work area. Never take the attitude that any building is fireproof or that fires won't happen. Do what you can to prevent fires, but always be prepared by knowing what action to take if one occurs. Know where alarms and fire extinguishers are located. Good teamwork is a must. Don't get burned, when you think of fire, think of safety!

## **GENERAL SAFETY REVIEW**

This is a time to review all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any safety hazards from any other crews? Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.

Do we have any other safety business? Discuss any past issues or problems. Report any progress of investigations and action taken.

Have there been any accidents, near misses or complaints? Discuss any accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.

Please remember, we want to hear from you about any health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

### **ENDING THE MEETING**

Circulate Sign-Off Form.

Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.

Refer action items for follow-up.

Do you have any Safety Recommendations?

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Do you have any Job Specific Topics you would like us to discuss?

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Have you reviewed the M.S.D.S Sheet for this safety topic? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_  
N/A\_\_\_\_

### **Comments**

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