

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

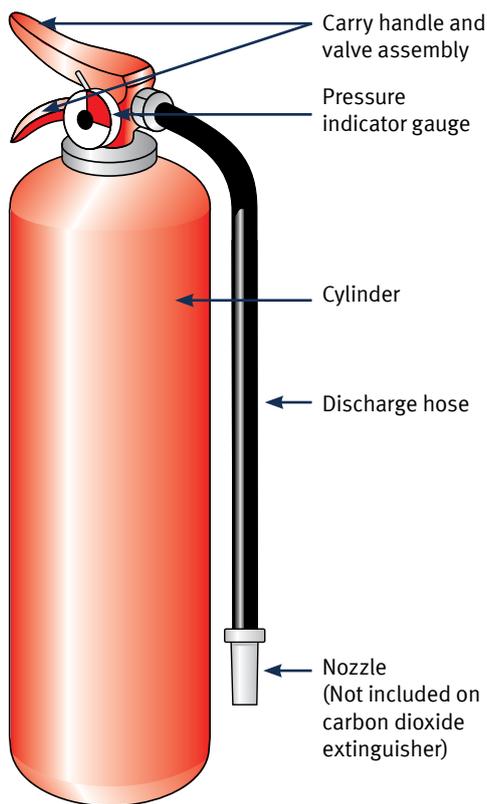


Fire extinguishers are a tool which can be used in homes to assist in extinguishing small fires. It is important to understand how to safely and correctly use a fire extinguisher in the event of a home fire.

There are several different types of fire extinguishers, designed for extinguishing fires arising from different sources. The correct fire extinguisher must be used in each instance. Using the wrong extinguisher could result in increasing the fire and endangering of yourself and other members of your household.

All fire extinguishers must comply with the Australian Standard AS/NZS 1841.1:2007 - Portable fire extinguishers - General requirements.

Parts of a fire extinguisher



If you are concerned about your safety, get out and call emergency services on Triple Zero (000).

Fire extinguisher types

Fire extinguishers have a coloured band to denote their contents.

Band Colour	Extinguisher Type	Suitable for (class of fire)	Comments
All Red	Water	A	Not safe on other classes of fire.
Blue	Foam	BA	Not safe on other classes of fire.
White	Powder	B, (E)	'AB(E)' type powder is also suitable on Class A fires.
Black	Carbon dioxide	(E), B	Beware of discharge pressure. Has a noisy and cold discharge.
Yellow	Vaporising liquid	(E), A, B	Yellow BCF types have been withdrawn from general use.
Oatmeal	Wet chemical	F, (A)	Older BCF types have been withdrawn from general use.

Which one should I buy for my home?

Dry Chemical Powder (AB(E)) (White Band).

This type of extinguisher is suitable for most household fires due to its effectiveness against most types of fires. A one kilogram Dry Chemical Fire Extinguisher will last approximately 10 to 12 seconds.

Fire extinguishers in the home should be stored so they are easy to get to but are away from areas likely to catch fire. For example, locate the fire extinguisher at the entrance to the kitchen, not inside the kitchen.

Regular maintenance is essential to ensuring your extinguisher will work correctly when required.

- » Monitor the pressure gauge to ensure correct pressure. Have the extinguisher pressure tested by a professional every five years.
- » Shake it occasionally to prevent the powder from settling.
- » Ensure you read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- » Contact your local council for information on disposal options.

Use a fire extinguisher ONLY if:

- » you know that the extinguisher is suitable for use on the flammable materials involved in the fire
- » you have considered whether electricity is possibly involved and, if so, that the available extinguishing agent is non-conducting
- » you can extinguish the fire quickly
- » you are not putting your safety at risk by staying in the vicinity of the fire, and
- » all other persons have been evacuated from the area.

Classes of fire

Fire fuels are divided into six classes. Categorising fuels into classes can help you with identification of the type of extinguishing medium required to extinguish a particular class of fire.

Class A fires are those which involve carbonaceous solids. A carbonaceous solid is one which contains the chemical element carbon as the basic fuel. This is probably the most common type of fire encountered by firefighters.

Examples: Wood, paper, cloth, rubber, plastics, grass, coal.



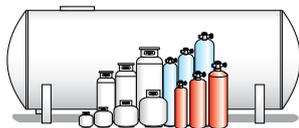
Class B fires involve flammable and combustible liquids.

Examples: Petrol, kerosene, oil, tar, paint, wax.



Class C fires involve combustible gases.

Examples: Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), butane, propane Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), acetylene.

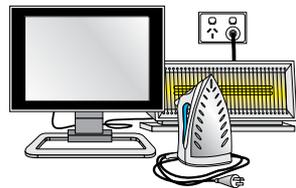


Class D fires involve combustible metals.

Examples: Sodium, potassium, magnesium and aluminium shavings.



Electrical Fires. There is no 'official' Class E fire as electricity is not a fuel. It does not burn like a fuel. However, it is a dangerous complication at a fire because it is a source of heat and potential electric shock.



Class F fires involve cooking oils and fats.

Examples: Lard, vegetable oils



How do I use a fire extinguisher?

The easiest way to remember how to use a fire extinguisher is PASS.

Pull the pin at the top of the extinguisher. Hold the extinguisher by the bottom handle to allow easy removal of the pin.



Aim the nozzle towards the base of the fire.



Squeeze the handle to discharge the extinguisher.



Sweep the nozzle from side to side aiming at the base of the fire

