



Portable Fire Extinguishers – Do's and Don'ts

Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions on the job site.

Portable fire extinguishers are not suitable for every fire, and using one can increase the risk of injury if the situation is unsafe. Before attempting to extinguish a fire, and after the fire appears to be out, keep these key points in mind:

- ✓ **Notify someone else about the fire.** They can activate the fire alarm system while you attempt to extinguish the fire, and also keep an eye on you in case trouble develops.
- ✓ **Make sure the fire is not too big!** Portable extinguishers are intended for use on small "incipient stage" fires that have just started. They are not used to fight large fires that require the user to wear thermal protective clothing or a respiratory protection device.
- ✓ **Look for "traps" that could cause you to get injured.** Flammable liquids that are spilled on the floor could catch fire and cause the fire to spread, but they could also cause you to lose your footing and slip. And burning fires could create toxic gases that might overcome you, so avoid fighting a fire that has already produced a lot of smoke in the area.
- ✓ **Make certain you always have a clear escape route.** Never put yourself in a position where you may become trapped should the fire spread. Always try to keep the fire in front of you, and a clear route of escape behind you.
- ✓ **Keep an eye out for flare-ups.** Once the fire is supposedly extinguished, it is possible for embers to smolder for quite a while and cause the fire to reignite. Look for signs of smoke, as that is a clue that heat is present in the fire debris that could cause a flare-up.
- ✓ **Always turn in extinguishers to be recharged after any use.** Even though the used extinguisher may still be partially filled, activating the extinguisher breaks the seal that retains the pressure inside the shell. If someone else picks it up later and tries to put out a fire, the extinguisher will not fully function as intended. So never re-mount any extinguisher if you have pulled the pin, just turn it in so we can get it checked out and re-charged.

Toolbox Attendance

Questions? _____

Concerns? _____

Days since Last Incident: _____

Supervisor/Meeting Leader: _____ Date: _____

Signatures of attendees:

Manager review comments:

Manager signature: _____ Date of Review: _____