

▶ Fire Extinguisher – USAGE

If fire extinguishers are available for employee use, it is the employer's responsibility to educate employees on the principles and practices of using a fire extinguisher and the hazards associated with fighting small or developing fires. [OHS Act 85 of 1993 - 8. General duties of employers to their employees]

This education must be provided annually and when a new employee is first hired. Employees who have been designated to use fire extinguishers as part of the emergency action plan, must be trained on how to use the fire extinguishers appropriately in the workplace. This training is a specialized form of education that focuses on developing or improving skills and it must be provided annually and when employees are first assigned these duties.

Using a Fire Extinguisher

The following steps should be followed when responding to incipient stage fire:

1. Sound the fire alarm and call the fire department, if appropriate.
2. Identify a safe evacuation path before approaching the fire.
3. Do not allow the fire, heat, or smoke to come between you and your evacuation path.
4. Select the appropriate type of fire extinguisher.
5. Discharge the extinguisher within its effective range using the P.A.S.S. technique (pull, aim, squeeze, sweep).
6. Back away from an extinguished fire in case it flames up again.
7. Evacuate immediately if the extinguisher is empty and the fire is not out.
8. Evacuate immediately if the fire progress beyond the incipient stage.



Most fire extinguishers operate using the following **P.A.S.S.** technique:

1. **PULL...** Pull the pin. This will also break the tamper seal.
2. **AIM...** Aim low, pointing the extinguisher nozzle (or its horn or hose) at the base of the fire.
NOTE: Do not touch the plastic discharge horn on CO2 extinguishers, it gets very cold and may damage skin.
3. **SQUEEZE...** Squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent.
4. **SWEEP...** Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire until it appears to be out. Watch the area. If the fire re-ignites, repeat steps 2 - 4.

If you have the slightest doubt about your ability to fight a fire....EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY!