

Using a Home Fire Extinguisher



Every home should be equipped with a fire extinguisher. Get one that's labeled as safe to use on any kind of fire and keep it within easy reach.

All household extinguishers are classified A, B, or C (or a combination of these) on the label to indicate which types of fires you can use them on.

- Class A: Paper, wood and fabric fires
- Class B: Oil, grease and gasoline fires
- Class C: Electrical fires



Many of the ones sold at home stores are classified A: B:C and fight all three types of fires. The two extinguishers identified as ideal for home use bear the designation 3-A; 40-B; C, which means that the tank contains non-conducting extinguishing material equivalent of 3.75 gallons of water that can cover a maximum area of 40 square feet.

Install extinguishers in the kitchen, garage, workshop, or wherever you have flammables. Install them near exits, away from heat sources. Keep extinguishers easy for adults to see and reach, but out of the reach of children.



The National Fire Protection Association (www.nfpa.org) recommends an extinguisher for each floor. But no matter how many you have; nothing can substitute for the most important safety tool: a **fire plan**. Make sure everyone in the family knows how to get out in a hurry, where to meet outside, and how to call 911. Even if you think you've put out the fire on your own, don't cancel that emergency call. Leave it to the pros to decide if it's really out.



If a fire starts, **ALWAYS CALL 911 FIRST**

Become familiar with these tips to understand how to use a fire extinguisher on a small fire:

- First, **Pull the pin** from the fire extinguisher — it won't work if you don't.
- **Aim the extinguisher toward the base of the fire**, not the top of the flames.
- Holding it by the handle, **Squeeze the lever on the fire extinguisher**; just let go when you want to stop.
- **Sweep horizontally back and forth** across the fire until it's extinguished, remembering to aim low.



No matter what active chemical your fire extinguisher contains, you should avoid inhaling the output. Keep the nozzle pointed away from you and from other people at all times.



Once you've discharged a fire extinguisher, you should either **refill it or replace** it. Never leave an empty fire extinguisher around the house. You may forget that it's empty and let it sit for years until another fire occurs and you discover you can't put it out.

