

Detroit Fire Department

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS—First Aid for Fires

A cut finger may send you to the medicine cabinet for antiseptic, bandages and other first-aid items. But, what do you do in case of fire in your home?



Many lives have been lost in fires simply because people were not prepared to deal with accidental fires. In fact, it is estimated that less than five percent of the nation's homes have fire extinguishers.

Fire extinguishers are considered first-aid equipment for controlling and putting out small fires before they become large ones. However, they are no substitute for the fire department in the event of a large or major blaze.

Having the proper fire extinguisher, as well as knowing how to use it and when not to use it, is important in safeguarding your household.

Selecting the proper extinguisher for your home is as simple as A-B-C. The key to fire extinguisher codes is as follows: A—is for wood, paper, cloth and other ordinary combustibles, B—is for oil, grease, flammable liquids and combustible gases and C—is for energized electrical and electronic equipment. The types of fire on which the extinguisher is effective is marked by these letters on the label or name plate.

The number preceding the letter indicates the relative size of fire on which it is effective. Thus, a 10 B:C rated extinguisher can be used on a gas, liquid or electrical fire roughly twice the size as that combatted effectively by a 5 B:C extinguisher.



The three types of fires described above are common to most households. For this reason, an all-purpose extinguisher with a 2A:10 B:C rating is adequate for most

household uses. This unit will no doubt be a little more expensive but a less expensive one may turn out to be anything but a bargain if it can't handle your emergency needs.

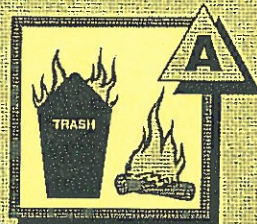
As an alternative, buy several smaller extinguishers to handle different needs—such as a Class A extinguisher for the bedroom and living areas, and a Class B:C extinguisher for the kitchen, workshop and laundry areas.

In any case, extinguishers won't do any good if they are not located and

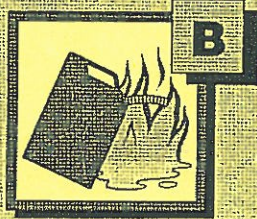
for Fires

Make sure that all members of the family know how to use fire extinguishers. Hold actual family practice sessions, if possible, but make certain you purchase a recharge kit, or let a professional recharge it for you, afterwards. A unit with a gauge will enable you to check for enough pressure to do the job effectively.

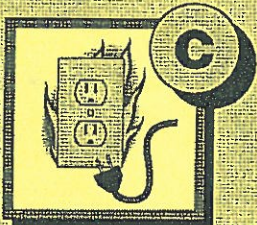
Types of Fire Extinguishers



is for wood, paper, cloth and other ordinary combustibles.



is for oil, grease, flammable liquids and combustible gases.



is for energized electrical and electronic equipment.



installed for easy use. Extinguishers should never be more than 75 feet away from Class A hazards or farther than 50 feet from Class B hazards.

Place them in areas of potential fire hazards, but never on or near furnaces, stoves, or equipment which couldn't be approached in case it caught fire.

If a fire strikes, don't forget to evacuate other members of the family and call your fire department first. Fire extinguishers are for use in controlling small fires providing you have a way out—not in combating conflagrations.