

Know How to Use a Fire Extinguisher



Every home should have at least one fire extinguisher. Extinguishers should be mounted in plain sight and be simple for all family members (except small children, of course) to use in an emergency. Show the babysitter how it works, too.

- Buy a multipurpose extinguisher rated 2A10BC or higher. The letters indicate the type of fire the extinguisher will douse. “A” units are for combustible materials like paper or wood, “B” units are for flammable liquids like gasoline, and “C” units are for electrical fires. The numbers relate to the size of the fire. The higher the number, the greater the capacity to extinguish that fire.
- Check for a UL (Underwriters Laboratory) or FM (Fire Mutual) code. They tell you the product is effective, safe, and reliable.
- Be sure the directions are simple to understand.
- Mount the fire extinguisher securely, in plain sight.
- Be sure you understand how the firing mechanism works. Check to see whether you need to push a button or pull a lever. Don’t activate the extinguisher, though. Once you do, it must be serviced and recharged, even if you only use it for a few seconds and the gauge indicates it’s full.
- Check the pressure indicator once a month to be sure the extinguisher works.

To use a fire extinguisher, remember the acronym PASS.

- Pull the pin.
- Aim the nozzle or barrel at the base of the fire, not at the flames.
- Squeeze the handle.
- Sweep back and forth at the base of the fire.