

How to Use a Fire Extinguisher

Alert that there is a fire before operation

Pull

Aim

Squeeze

Sweep



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

Using a Fire Extinguisher Safely

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.

Using a Fire Extinguisher Safely

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

- Discharge the extinguisher within its **effective range** using the **P.A.S.S.** technique (pull, aim, squeeze, sweep).
- **Back away** from an extinguished fire in case it flames up again.
- **Evacuate** immediately if the extinguisher is empty and the fire is not out.
- **Evacuate** immediately if the fire progresses beyond the incipient stage.

Fight or Flight

Don't fight a fire if:

- **You don't have adequate or appropriate equipment.**

If you don't have the correct type or large enough extinguisher, it is best not to try fighting the fire.

- **You might inhale toxic smoke.**

When synthetic materials such as the nylon in carpeting or foam padding in a sofa burn, they can produce hydrogen cyanide, acrolein, and ammonia in addition to carbon monoxide. These gases can be fatal in very small amounts.

- **Your instincts tell you not to.**

If you are uncomfortable with the situation for any reason, just let the fire department do its job.

Risk Assessment

Question	Incipient stage fires	Fires that SHOULD NOT be fought with a portable fire extinguisher
Is the fire too big?	The fire is limited to the original material ignited, is contained (such as in a waste basket) and has not spread to other materials. The flames are no higher than the firefighter's head.	The fire involves flammable solvents, has spread over more than 60 square feet, is partially hidden behind a wall or ceiling, or can not be reached from a standing position.
Is the air safe to breathe?	The fire has not depleted the oxygen in the room and is producing only small quantities of toxic gases. No respiratory protection equipment is required.	Due to smoke and products of combustion, the fire can not be fought without respiratory protection.
Is the environment too hot or smoky?	Heat is being generated, but the room temperature is only slightly increased. Smoke may be accumulating on the ceiling, but visibility is good. No special personal protective equipment is required.	The radiated heat is easily felt on exposed skin making it difficult to approach within 10-15 feet of the fire (or the effective range of the extinguisher). One must crawl on the floor due to heat or smoke. Smoke is quickly filling the room, decreasing visibility.
Is there a safe evacuation path?	There is a clear evacuation path that is behind you as you fight the fire.	The fire is not contained, and fire, heat, or smoke may block the evacuation path.

Finally

The final rule is to always position yourself with an exit or means of escape at your back before you attempt to use an extinguisher to put out a fire.

