

# Safe Use of Fire Extinguishers

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

## KEY POINTS:

- Get everyone to safety before trying to fight a fire.
- Use the correct type of [fire extinguisher](#) for the job.
- Never fight a chemical fire unless you have been specifically trained.

*Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.*

*Bring a map to the training session showing the location of fire extinguishers in your operation. Also, ask if someone from your local fire department can be present to demonstrate how a fire extinguisher works.*



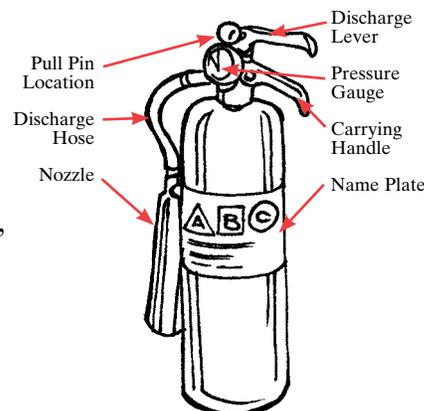
## Important tips on fighting fires

- Fires spread very quickly. In a split second, they can do an extensive amount of damage – and people can get seriously hurt or killed.
- That's why it's important to take the following steps when deciding whether or not to fight a fire yourself.
  1. Act quickly. Get other people to safety before trying to put out a fire.
  2. Immediately notify the fire department or have someone else do it for you.
  3. Judge the size of the fire. Only fight a fire if it is small and is confined to the immediate area.
  4. Look for an escape route. Don't fight a fire unless you are certain you can safely get out of the area.
  5. Be sure the [fire extinguisher](#) you have on hand is the right kind for the type of fire.
  6. Only fight a fire if you are comfortable doing so. Don't panic and don't try to be a hero.



## Choosing the right fire extinguisher

- Using the wrong type of extinguisher on a fire can make the situation worse. Here are the main types of [fire extinguishers](#):
  1. Class A – for fighting fires in ordinary combustible materials, such as wood, paper, cloth, straw or hay.
  2. Class B – for fires in flammable liquids, such as grease, gasoline, paint, solvents, fuel oil and kerosene.
  3. Class C – for electrical fires.
  4. Class A, B, C – for combination fires.
  5. Class D – for fires in combustible metals such as magnesium.
- Never use a fire extinguisher unless it is in good working order.



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See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

# Safe Use of Fire Extinguishers

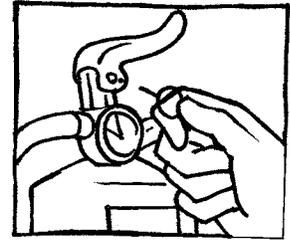
## Using a fire extinguisher

- Know where the closest [fire extinguisher](#) is located. Then check the letter on the extinguisher (A, B, C or D) to make sure it's the proper type for the fire.

**Note to trainer:** Review with trainees the map of your operation showing where [fire extinguishers](#) are located. Tell trainees where each type of extinguisher is located.

- Follow these five steps when you're ready to use the [fire extinguisher](#):  
**Note to trainer:** If someone from your local fire department is present, have that person demonstrate the following steps. You can demonstrate them yourself if you are certain you know the correct procedures.

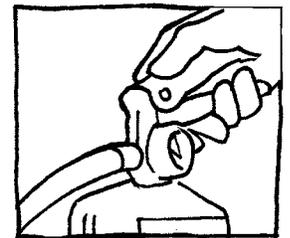
1. Hold the [fire extinguisher](#) upright, and pull the safety pin at the top.
2. Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire.
3. Stay six to 10 feet away from the fire.
4. Squeeze the handle.
5. Using a sweeping motion, quickly spray the fire extinguishing agent over the entire base of the fire.



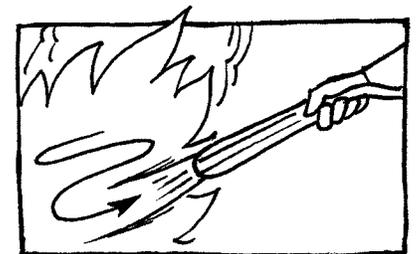
Pull the safety pin.



Aim at the base of flames.



Squeeze the handle.



Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire.

**Warning:** Never try to fight a chemical fire unless the fire department has been notified, you have received specific training in fighting chemical fires, and you are wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment.

## A few more safety tips

- Notify your supervisor if you spot a fire extinguisher with a missing safety pin, a gauge that has been discharged, or a tag indicating that it has not been serviced. Don't try to use that [fire extinguisher](#).
- Immediately leave the area if a fire begins to spread.
- If you can do it safely, turn off the power in the area before fighting an electrical fire.
- Stay low if you are inside a burning building. You will breathe in less smoke near the floor.
- Don't try to fight a fire unless you have been trained in the proper use of [fire extinguishers](#).

## Are there any questions?

**Note to trainer:** Take time to answer trainees' questions.

Then review the **Fire Extinguisher Safety Do's and Don'ts**.

### FIRE EXTINGUISHER SAFETY DO'S AND DON'TS

**DO:**

- Know the location of all telephones, emergency exits and [fire extinguishers](#).
- Stay low when you're in a fire situation to avoid breathing smoke and vapors.
- Back away from the fire area to safety once the fire is out.

**DON'T:**

- Continue trying to fight a fire if it starts to spread.
- Ever play around with a fire extinguisher.
- Use water to fight a flammable liquid fire or an electrical fire.

See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.