

AT THE END OF THE WORKDAY, EVERYONE GOES HOME SAFE.

# PASS the Fire Extinguisher Toolbox Talk



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**F**ire extinguishers are one of the most common pieces of lifesaving equipment, evident by the number required in buildings and around jobsites. They are important to have around, but knowing how they work, when to use them, and their limitations are all information we need to know. Understanding this information can be the difference between life and death.

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According to the National Association of Fire Extinguishing Equipment Distributors, 12,505 of 13,221 reported fires were successfully put out by fire extinguishers, a 95% success rate. Fire extinguishers can make all the difference in emergency situations with fire.

But before we talk about how fire extinguishers work, we need to understand how a fire works. Fire is a chemical reaction between oxygen and a combustible/flammable material which creates heat, flames, light, and smoke.

For a fire to exist and keep burning, you must have four things present: sufficient oxygen to sustain combustion; enough heat to get/keep material at its ignition tempera-

ture; fuel/combustible material; and the chemical reaction that is fire. If you remove any one of those things, the fire will go out.

## How Fire Extinguishers Work:

Fire extinguishers are effective by removing one of the four elements required to have a fire. Most are filled with a dry chemical, labeled an “ABC” chemical for A, B, and/or C fires. An A fire is one of paper, cloth, wood, or

things that result in (A)sh. B fires are oils, paints, and liquids that can (B)oil. And C fire is one caused by electricity that has (C)urrent. While there are others, these are the types common to construction sites.

This type of dry-chemical fire extinguisher works by separating the fuel from the oxygen and by interrupting the chemical reaction. They are highly effective, hence why they are the most common type of fire extinguisher.

Another effective type of fire extinguisher is the carbon dioxide extinguisher. This type of extinguisher is effective by displacing the oxygen in the area, but they can be dangerous to the user as it also eliminates the oxygen they need to breathe. These extinguishers

should never be used in a confined space.

## Using a Fire Extinguisher:

For some, using a fire extinguisher can be an intimidating task. Being in a fire emergency can be daunting. To remain calm and in control of the situation, just remember the acronym PASS.

**P:** Pull the pin

**A:** Aim the nozzle

**S:** Squeeze the handle

**S:** Sweep the nozzle at the base of the fire

Following the PASS method of extinguishing a fire provides a simple step-by-step approach.

## Talking Points:

1. Where are our fire extinguishers located on this jobsites?
2. Where are our extinguishers at our office/shop?
3. What poses the greatest fire risk to us in our day-to-day activities?

