



eSafetyLine

Anatomy of a Fire Extinguisher

Fire Extinguishers

Although fire extinguishers come in many shapes and sizes depending upon what type of fire they're to be used for, they all have the same basic parts. In order to correctly maintain, inspect and use a fire extinguisher, it is important to know the parts and understand their functions.

- The cylinder: This is the body of the fire extinguisher. It contains some combination of an extinguishing agent, to put out the fire and an expellant gas, to propel the extinguishing agent from the cylinder. The extinguishing agent varies according to the classes of fires the extinguisher should be used on. The expellant gas is usually pressurized nitrogen.
- The handle: The handle is nothing more than a way to carry and hold the extinguisher when it is in use. Handle design varies with extinguisher models however any portable extinguisher weighing more than 3 pounds must have a handle. The handle has nothing to do with discharging the extinguisher.
- The trigger: This is usually a short bar placed above the handle at the top of the extinguisher. The trigger must be squeezed to release the extinguishing agent from the nozzle.
- The nozzle or horn: Although there is variation depending on the make and model of the extinguisher, the extinguishing agent passes out of the extinguisher through some type of nozzle. The nozzle can be fixed to the top of the extinguisher or attached to the extinguisher by a short hose.

- The pressure gauge or indicator: The pressure stored in a portable extinguisher can decrease over time. Too large a pressure decrease can cause the extinguisher not to function correctly. The pressure gauge or indicator allows the pressure to be checked periodically to be sure the extinguisher will function when needed. This should be done at least once a month.
- The locking mechanism: In order to prevent an accidental discharge of an extinguisher they come with some type of locking mechanism that must be removed or released before the extinguisher will discharge. In most models this involves a pin with a large loop at one end, located below the trigger. The pin must be removed in order to squeeze the trigger.

Discussion Questions

How often should the pressure gauge be checked on a fire extinguisher?

What is the role of the expellant gas?

MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: _____

_____ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: _____

_____ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: ___/___/_____

TIME: _____

TOPICS ADDRESSED: _____

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

_____	_____	_____
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EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

ACTION TAKEN: _____

Supervisor's Signature

_____/_____/_____
Date

Safety Coordinator's Signature

_____/_____/_____
Date