

CRAFTSMAN CRIBSHEET

Which Fire Extinguisher Should You Use?

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In the heat of the moment, it is hard to know which extinguisher to grab. Preparation is key to making the right move to save yourself and others. Knowing the proper extinguisher to use before an emergency happens allows for quick and accurate decision making when seconds count.

Class of Fire	Description
Class A Fires	Fires in ordinary combustibles materials, such as wood, cloth or paper. Think trash can fire. May be extinguished with water (A water bottle-type extinguisher), dry chemical (ABC) or foam extinguishers (AB).
Class B Fires	Fires in flammable liquids, combustible liquids, petroleum greases, tars, oils, oil-based paints, solvents, lacquers, alcohols and flammable gases. Class B Fires are the most common type of fire in our shops. Water is not a way to extinguish these fires as it will vaporize from the heat and can spread the liquid accelerant, spreading the fire. CO ₂ (BC) and dry chemical agents (ABC) extinguishers are great for this type of fire.
Class C Fires	Fires that involve energized electrical equipment. Again, water is not the way. Water can cause dangerous conditions, conducting electricity in the appliance spreading the fire or injuring personnel fighting the fire. CO ₂ (BC) extinguishers are best for these types of fires. CO ₂ rapidly cools and eliminates oxygen from the flame, smothering the fire. CO ₂ will evaporate quickly without leaving residue on delicate electronic components.
Class D Fires	Fires in combustible metals, such as magnesium, titanium, zirconium, sodium, lithium and potassium. Dry powder (D) extinguishers are used to incorporate a soft flow extension applicator to keep operator's hands away from the extreme heat, preventing inhalation of the toxic fumes.
Class K Fires	K is for kitchen fires in cooking appliances that involve combustible cooking media (vegetable or animal oils and fats). Wet chemical (K) extinguishers are designed specifically for these types of fires.

Extinguisher Types	Typical Label	Class of Fire
Water Based (A)	A	Used on class A fires
CO ₂	BC	Used on class B and C fires
Dry Chemical Agent	ABC	Used on class A, B and C fires
Dry Powder Type	D	Used on class D fires
Halogenated Agent	ABC	Used on class A, B and C fires. Not used as much due to environmental concerns
Foam Type	AB	Used on class A and B (liquid only) fires. Not suitable for temps below freezing and gaseous fires
Wet Chemical	K	Used on class K fires