

## **Toolbox Talk # 4.01 – Fire Extinguishers**

When a fire starts on-site, think first of your safety and the safety of others. Sound the alarm and alert the fire department. Try to put out the fire only if you have been trained to use extinguishers, and the fire is small and tame enough to be extinguished by a hand-held extinguisher or whatever other firefighting equipment or supplies are available to you on the job site.

The specific causes and agents contributing to fires differ, and the methods to fight these different fires vary. Because of this, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has classified fires into four types. Fire extinguishers should be labeled with the classes of fires they extinguish. Use the following chart to see the classifications of fire and extinguishers.

If you use a fire extinguisher, be sure to use one only on fires for which that extinguisher is designed. Using the wrong agent on a fire may increase the intensity of the fire. There are only two dry chemical extinguishers that can be used on A, B, and C fires, and those are multi-purpose ABC extinguishers, either stored pressure or cartridge operated. Multi-purpose extinguishers (ABC) will handle all A, B, and C fires. All fire extinguishers are labeled with either ABC, or A, or B, or C, so be sure to read the label. If the fire can be contained or extinguished, a properly trained person should use the right extinguisher on the blaze.

When using a typical extinguisher, follow the "PASS" method. Hold the extinguisher upright, and:

- Pull the pin, stand back eight or ten feet.
- Aim at the base of the fire.
- Squeeze the handle.
- Sweep at the base of the fire with the extinguishing agent.

If you aim high at the flames, you won't put out the fire. Remember, too, that most extinguishers have a very limited operation time, only 8-10 seconds, so you have to act fast and spray correctly at the base of the fire, not at smoke or flames. If the fire is out of control, the combustible material is unknown, or you have not been trained in the proper use of extinguishers, leave the fire fighting to professionals with the proper equipment. In this case, sound the fire alarm, then call for emergency help from a safe place.

## Toolbox Talk # 4.01 – Fire Extinguishers

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Other safety issues covered or comments from crew members:

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### Attendees:

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