

FIRE EXTINGUISHER USE

Attempting to extinguish even a small fire carries some risk. Fires can increase in size and intensity in seconds, blocking the exit path of the fire fighter and creating a hazardous atmosphere. In addition, portable fire extinguishers contain a limited amount of extinguishing agent and can be discharged in a matter of seconds. **Therefore, individuals should attempt to fight only very small or incipient stage fires. Using a fire extinguisher is not a requirement. The only thing anyone is required to do is pull the Pull Station to get everyone out.** You must call x5555 to report the use of a fire extinguisher.

Portable fire extinguishers have two functions:

1. To control or extinguish small or incipient stage fires and
2. To protect evacuation routes that a fire may block directly or indirectly

To extinguish a fire with a portable extinguisher a person:

- must have immediate access to the extinguisher,
- know how to actuate the unit,
- know how to apply the agent effectively, and
- perform a **risk assessment** that evaluates:
 1. the fire size,
 2. the atmosphere, and
 3. the evacuation path

Risk Assessment Question	Incipient stage fires or fires that can be extinguished with portable fire extinguishers	Fires that SHOULD NOT be fought with a portable fire extinguisher REQUIRES IMMEDIATE EVACUATION
Is the fire too big?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited to the original material ignited, 2. It is contained and has not spread, and 3. The flames are not higher than the firefighter's head. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The fire involves flammable solvents, 2. Has spread over more than 60 square feet, 3. Is partially hidden behind a wall or ceiling, or 4. Can not be reached from a standing position.
Is the air safe to breathe?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The fire has not depleted the oxygen in the room, 2. No toxic gases are being produced, and 3. No respiratory protection is required. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Due to smoke and products of combustion, the fire can not be fought without respiratory protection
Is the environment too hot or smoky?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The room temperature is only slightly increased, 2. Smoke may be accumulating on the ceiling, but visibility is good, and 3. No special PPE is required. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The radiated heat is easily felt on exposed skin making it difficult to approach within 10 – 15 feet of the fire, 2. One must crawl on the floor due to heat or smoke, or 3. Smoke is quickly filling the room decreasing visibility.
Is there a safe evacuation path?	There is a clear evacuation path that is behind you as you fight the fire.	The fire is not contained, and fire, heat, or smoke may block the evacuation path.