

Fire Extinguisher ABC's

By Basil Housewright

In addition to ensuring that your home has working smoke detectors, one of the most important safety items you should have in your home are fire extinguishers. Experts recommend that you have at least two fire extinguishers close to an exit, one near the kitchen and another in your garage. If your home or property includes a workshop, it's a good idea to have a fire extinguisher there as well. When choosing a fire extinguisher and deciding where to keep it in your home, consider these A-B-Cs. . . .

CLASS A extinguishers are best for putting out fires involving wood, paper/cardboard, or plastics.

CLASS B is designed for fires started by flammable liquids: grease, kerosene, oil or gas.

CLASS C extinguishers are for electrical fires, such as those that involve outlets, circuit breakers, or electrical equipment.

The good news is that you don't have to buy three separate extinguishers. Most common household fire extinguishers are effective for all types of fires, and are rated ABC. Once you have made the purchase, you should routinely check to be sure it is charged and operational.

When it comes time to use an extinguisher, you don't want to have to think about it twice. So why not include a practice session for each family member the next time you practice your escape plan? **PASS** is a simple tip for how to use an extinguisher:

- **P** — **PULL** the pin, with the nozzle pointing away from you.
- **A** — **AIM** low, pointing at the fire's base.
- **S** — **SQUEEZE** the lever slowly.
- **S** — **SWEEP** evenly side-to-side.

Don't forget the importance of practicing your escape plan regularly! To learn more about fire safety, check out these websites:

- This Old House: How to Choose and Use Fire Extinguishers - <https://www.thisoldhouse.com/ideas/how-to-choose-and-use-fire-extinguishers>
- Ready.gov: Home Fires - <https://www.ready.gov/home-fires>
- National Fire Protection Association: Safety Tip Sheets - <http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets>

Home fires can be deadly so a plan for safety and ability to quickly react if a fire breaks out is important and can save lives. Ever year homes burn especially during warm, dry summers and around 4th of July fireworks festivities.

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