

Dear Neighbors,

Based on discussions at the Safety and Security Committee, what follows is a brief overview of Fire Extinguishers: this is not meant as a complete thesis on fire safety and protection, but rather offers a few tips that may address common sense home safety.

PURPOSES FOR FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:

The main reasons for having fire extinguishers readily available at home is to:

- Suppress a fire along an escape route so trapped persons can exit a burning structure.
- To extinguish or contain a fire from the time it is discovered until the arrival of fire department personnel.

Caveats: ONLY FIGHT A FIRE --

- AFTER you have called 911
- AFTER those in immediate danger are evacuated safely
- If it is small and contained, without risk to your personal safety
- If you are safe from toxic smoke
- If you have a means of escape
- If your instincts tell you it is ok.

The RIGHT FIRE EXTINGUISHER For A Home:

There are several types of fire extinguishers available, but the best type for home use is a multipurpose "ABC" type extinguisher. Because extinguishers are rated for the type of fire they are made to extinguish, the ABC is best for most common home fire possibilities.

- A - Ordinary combustible materials such as wood, paper, etc.
- B - Flammable liquids such as gas, oil, grease and other petroleum products.
- C - Electrical fires.



Multipurpose extinguishers are available in 2, 5 and 10 pound sizes. The larger the extinguisher the longer it takes to completely discharge. Because the discharge time for these sizes ranges from 8 to 25 seconds, a five-pound extinguisher is a practical size for home use.

When purchasing an extinguisher, make sure it is U.L. (Underwriters Laboratories) or F.M. (Factory Mutual Laboratories) approved. Extinguishers with these labels are manufactured to meet recognized safety and performance standards. You can also contact your local fire department for additional information about purchasing an extinguisher to meet your specific needs.

How to USE the FIRE EXTINGUISHER: Remember PASS

-Pull the pin.

-Aim the nozzle or hose at the base of the fire from the recommended safe distance.

-Squeeze the operating lever to discharge the fire extinguishing agent.

-Starting at the recommended distance, Sweep the nozzle or hose from side to side until the fire is out. Move forward or around the fire area as the fire diminishes. Watch the area in case of re-ignition.

WHERE TO PLACE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:

It is recommended to have AT LEAST one fire extinguisher on each floor of your home. Also, keep them in plain sight and no more than five feet above the floor. Do not put them in closets because that will cost you valuable time when you are reaching for it. Even though a fire extinguisher may not match your décor, do not put it out of sight.

The most important places to have a fire extinguisher are in areas that are more prone to fire. These areas are the kitchen and the garage.

Kitchen: According to U.S. Fire Administration statistics, the kitchen is the place where fires most often start. If you have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, most grease fires can be contained. Do not put the fire extinguisher near the stove as it will be out of your reach if the fire is on the stovetop. You should not have to risk burns just to reach your extinguisher. Therefore, the best place to put the fire extinguisher is by the entrance to the kitchen so you have easy access to it.

Garage: It is a good idea to keep a fire extinguisher here because in most homes, this is the place we use as storage. Often, leftover paints, solvents, and building materials will be piled up without a second thought. Again, the best location to mount the fire extinguisher is by the door.

Additional Locations:

Furnace/Basement Areas: If you store anything that can burn in your basement, consider an additional extinguisher in this area, again near a doorway.

Bedroom: historically, most fires occur between 8 pm and 8 am, a time when folks are relaxing or sleeping. An extinguisher in the bedroom area should be considered as well.

Respectfully Submitted,

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