

## Toolbox Talk: The ABC's of Fire Extinguishers

Just as every job has its specific tools, every fire has a specific extinguisher. Using the correct extinguisher is crucial for effectively controlling a fire and ensuring safety. The class of an extinguisher, indicated on its label, corresponds to the type of fire it is designed to combat. On most construction sites, we deal primarily with Class A, B, and C fires, making a multi-purpose Class ABC extinguisher—containing a dry chemical powder under pressure—the best option. Let's break down the types of fires and the corresponding extinguishers for each:



### Class A Fires

- Description: Involve common combustible materials like wood, paper, trash, and other items that produce glowing embers as they burn.
- Extinguisher to Use: Class A or Class ABC extinguishers.
- Important Note: A Class A extinguisher contains water and must only be used on Class A fires. Using it on gasoline can spread the fire and using it on electrical fires can cause electrocution.

### Class B Fires

- Description: Involve flammable liquids and gases, such as gasoline, solvents, paint thinners, grease, LPG, and acetylene.
- Extinguisher to Use: Class B or Class ABC extinguishers.

## **Class C Fires**

- Description: Involve energized electrical equipment.
- Extinguisher to Use: Class BC or Class ABC extinguishers

## **Key Points to Remember**

1. Match the Extinguisher to the Fire: Always use the fire extinguisher that corresponds to the class of the fire you're dealing with.
2. Avoid Water-Based Extinguishers on Liquid or Electrical Fires: Never use a Class A extinguisher (water or foam) on Class B or C fires, as it can worsen the situation.
3. Know the Location and Usage: Familiarize yourself with where extinguishers are located on-site and how to use them. Always follow the instructions printed on the label.
4. Ensure Accessibility: Keep the area around fire extinguishers clear for quick and easy access in an emergency.
5. Maintain Visibility: Don't obstruct extinguishers by hanging coats, ropes, or other materials on them.
6. Proper Care and Maintenance: Treat fire extinguishers with the same care as your tools. Never remove tags, as they indicate the last service and inspection date.
7. Report Issues Promptly: Report any defective or suspect extinguishers to your supervisor immediately for replacement or repair.
8. Inspect Regularly: Check for cracked hoses, plugged nozzles, corrosion, or any damage caused by equipment.
9. Use Only for Fires: Never use fire extinguishers for anything other than fighting fires.

## **Summary**

Knowing which fire extinguisher to use in an emergency is essential for safety. Class A fires involve ordinary combustibles, Class B fires involve flammable liquids and gases, and Class C fires involve electrical equipment. Always use the right extinguisher for the job, ensure they are easily accessible and well-maintained, and never use them for anything other than their intended purpose. By staying informed and prepared, we can handle fire emergencies effectively and safely.



## SAFETY TRAINING SIGN IN SHEET

<b>TRAINING TITLE</b>	The ABC's of Fire Extinguishers		
<b>DATE &amp; TIME</b>		<b>LOCATION</b>	
<b>COMPANY</b>		<b>TRAINER</b>	

<b>NAME</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>	<b>PHONE</b>