



FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Even though your company may be equipped with automatic sprinklers or other means of fire protection, the portable fire extinguisher is the first line of defense in the control of fires at their start.

Most fires, in the beginning stage, can be extinguished easily with portable equipment, but only if the equipment is readily accessible and the employee knows how to use it. The reaction time, from when the fire is first realized, is extremely important. If time is wasted in a search for the proper fire extinguisher and a review of the operating instructions, a small, easily controlled fire will spread in size and intensity. The fire will get out of control and both lives and equipment will be endangered.

Knowledge of the various types of extinguishers and their location in relation to the company layout or equipment is necessary for quick and effective employee action. This means that extinguishers should reflect the character of the fire anticipated for the company and its operations. Fire extinguisher locations should be clearly marked and readily accessible.

An inspection and recharging program should be in place to insure that when an extinguisher is needed, it is fully charged and operational. The program will run more effectively if the fire extinguishers are well positioned and clearly marked.

Too many fires have spread because the wrong extinguisher was used, the extinguisher was empty, the employee did not know how to operate the extinguisher, or the employee could not find an extinguisher in time to be of any help. Knowing where the fire extinguishers are and how to use them should be basic to any effective injury and illness prevention program (IIPP).