

Fire extinguishers

List fire extinguisher locations on site.

Explain dangers

Fire is a threat on many worksites, especially where open flames, flammable products, and flammable materials are used.

Welding, flame cutting, and thermal roofing are obvious examples. But fire hazards are connected with many paints, solvents, and adhesives as well.

Identify controls

Every worker who may be required to use fire extinguishing equipment shall be trained in its use. (O.Reg. 213/91, s. 52(1.1))

Fire extinguishers on construction sites must be

1. Accessible
2. Inspected regularly
3. Promptly refilled after use.

Extinguishers should be located:

- Where flammable materials are stored, handled, or used
- Where temporary oil-fired or gas-fired equipment is being used
- Where welding or open-flame cutting is being done
- On each storey of an enclosed building being constructed or renovated
- In shops for at least every 300 square metres (approx. 3,000 square feet) of floor area.

Extinguishers have a very short duration of discharge—usually less than 60 seconds. Within that limited duration, you’ve got to use the extinguisher effectively.

The goal is to extinguish the flames at their source. Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire and direct the spray back and forth in a rapid sweeping motion until the fire is extinguished.

Fire extinguishers are classified according to their capacity to fight specific kinds of fires.

Class A – for fires in ordinary combustible materials such as wood and paper where you need a quenching, cooling effect.

Class B – for flammable liquid and gas fires such as oil, gasoline, paint, and grease where you need oxygen exclusion or flame interruption.

Class C – for fires involving electrical wiring and equipment where you need a non-conductive extinguishing agent.

Class D – for fires in combustible metals such as sodium, magnesium, and potassium.

For most construction operations, a 4A40BC extinguisher will do the job.

Once you’ve discharged an extinguisher, report it immediately to your supervisor.

Demonstrate

On a 4A40BC extinguisher, explain the principal features—label, nozzle, gauge, pin, and handle.

Show how to hold and aim the extinguisher properly.

Show your crew some of the fire extinguisher locations at your site.

