



Public Education Program:

Fire Extinguisher Training

Using a portable fire extinguisher to put out a small fire can save lives and property, but only if you know how to operate the extinguisher properly. Training in the proper use of fire extinguishers is made available to the public by our department. Call 855-2252 or email tolson@ci.sedro-woolley.wa.us about scheduling a class.

Fire Extinguishers at Home or Business

When used properly, a portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or controlling it until the fire department arrives. Portable extinguishers, intended for the home, are not designed to fight large or spreading fires. However, even against small fires, they are useful only under certain conditions:

1. The operator must know how to use the extinguisher. There is no time to read directions during an emergency.
2. The extinguisher must be within easy reach and in working order, fully charged.
3. Some models are unsuitable for use on grease or electrical fires.

Choose your extinguisher carefully. A fire extinguisher should bear the seal of an independent testing laboratory. It should also be labeled as to the type of fire it is intended to extinguish. The extinguisher must be large enough to put out the fire. Most portable extinguishers discharge completely in as few as eight seconds.

Classes of fires: There are three basic classes of fires. All fire extinguishers are labeled with standard symbols for the classes of fires they can put out. A red slash through any of the symbols tells you the extinguisher cannot be used on that class fire. A missing symbol tells you only that the extinguisher has not been tested for use on a given class of fire.

Extinguisher sizes

Residential-Portable extinguishers are also rated for the size of fire they can handle. This rating is a number from 1 to 40 for Class A fires and 1 to 640 for Class B fires. The rating will appear on the label. The larger the number, the larger the fire extinguisher can put out. Higher-rated models are often heavier. Make sure you can hold and operate the extinguishers are rated 1A or 2A and/or 5B, 10B, or 20B. The "C" just indicates that you can use it on electrical fires.

Business- Minimum size ratings for businesses is 2A 10BC.

Installation and Maintenance

Residential- Extinguishers should be installed in plain view above the reach of children near an escape route and away from stoves and heating appliances.

Extinguishers require routine care. Read your operator's manual and ask your dealer how your extinguisher should be inspected and serviced. Rechargeable models must be serviced after every use. Disposable fire extinguishers can be used only once; they must be replaced after one use. Following manufacturer's instructions, check the pressure in your extinguishers once a month.

Business-Extinguishers are to be mounted as per location required by the Fire Chief or his designate. The top of the extinguisher should be mounted no higher than 5ft high for handicap accessibility. We recommend fire extinguishers be mounted near the exit (exiting the fire area is your first priority, extinguishment is second), and near work areas with identified hazards. Fire extinguishers are required to be inspected by an authorized service agency once per year.