

Environmental Health & Safety New Mexico State University MSC 3578, Box 30001 Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001

Fire Extinguisher and Fire Emergency Guide

General Guidance

- Portable fire extinguishers can be found in almost every facility at NMSU. They are the first line of defense against small fires in the workplace after a fire alarm has been activated.
- Employees should know:
 - o Where portable fire extinguishers and fire alarm pull stations are located in their work areas.
 - Facility evacuation routes and designated assembly points.
- There are 4 basic types of fire extinguishers and each are designed to extinguish a specific type of fire.
 The four types are:
 - Type A: Ordinary combustibles such as wood, cloth, paper, rubber and plastics.
 - Type B: Flammable liquids, such as gasoline, oil, grease, tar, oil-based paint, lacquer, and a flammable gas.
 - Type C: Energized electrical equipment, including wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers, machinery and appliances.
 - Type D: Combustible metals such as magnesium and potassium.
- Most portable fire extinguishers at NMSU are multi-purpose extinguishers (Type A, B, C).
- Employees need to be trained on how to properly use portable fire extinguishers. The NMSU Fire Department offers fire extinguisher training monthly.

What to do in a Fire Emergency

- If the fire is small, an evacuation exit is available and heavy smoke is NOT present:
 - o Immediately pull the handle on the nearest fire box and/or call Emergency Dispatch at 911.
 - o If properly trained and comfortable using a portable fire extinguisher, attempt to extinguish the fire. If the fire is not extinguished after the first attempt then evacuate the area and wait for the fire department to arrive. Otherwise warn others in the area and evacuate the building using pre-determined evacuation routes.
 - Do not use building elevators.
 - If unable to safely exit the building, go to the nearest safe area, report your location to emergency dispatch and wait for rescue.



- If the fire is large or the area is filled with heavy smoke:
 - o Pull the handle on the nearest fire box.
 - o Immediately evacuate the building using pre-determined evacuation routes.
 - o Call 911 from designated assembly areas.

Fire Extinguisher Use

- Regardless of size or type, all portable fire extinguishers basically operate the same way.
- When the decision is made to deploy a portable fire extinguisher the P-A-S-S procedure should be followed:
 - Pull the safety pin from the handle. Break the plastic seal.
 - o Aim the extinguisher at the base of the flame.
 - Squeeze the handle all the way down to release the agent.
 - Sweep the agent across the fire with a side-toside motion until the fire has been extinguished.
- Contact Facility & Services at (575) 646-7114 to obtain a replacement extinguisher.



Fire Extinguisher Inspection & Maintenance

- Portable fire extinguishers need to be inspected periodically.
- Fire extinguishers should be visually inspected at least monthly by building monitors or other personnel designated by departments. Monthly inspections should include:
 - Verify extinguishers are at designated locations.
 - Verify gauge pressure is ok (in green area).
 - Verify safety pins and tamper seals are in place.
 - Verify there is no physical damage to the exterior of the extinguisher.
 - Document the date the inspection was completed.
- Facilities & Services also performs an annual inspection on portable fire extinguishers.
 - This inspection is documented on the inspection tag attached to the extinguisher.
 - Report extinguishers that are overdue for inspection by submitting a work order to Facilities & Services.

