

# Residential Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are one element of a fire response plan, but most important in any fire situation is to get out safely. Fire extinguishers should only be used on small contained fires that are not spreading. Have working smoke alarms in your home and a fire escape plan for your family.

## Choosing a fire EXTINGUISHER for your home

The best fire extinguisher for a residential home is an A-B-C or multi-rated fire extinguisher which uses a dry chemical base. Most fire extinguishers will have an A-B-C designation or picture graphic showing the type of fire it can be used for. Fire extinguishers may be labeled as household or commercial fire extinguishers. Commercial fire extinguishers are mainly used in commercial business, apartments complexes, and public places and not necessary for residential homes. A-B-C is a class designation for different types of fires. Class A fires involved combustibles and in general are wood, trash, and paper products, Class B fires involve liquids and in residential homes are commonly a fire on the stove top involving oils and grease, and Class C fires are electrical in nature and can involve computers, electrical wiring, and appliances.

There are disposable and rechargeable fire extinguishers available at most hardware stores, large retail and big box stores, and through fire extinguisher service companies. Fire extinguishers should be approved by a recognized testing laboratory (Extinguishers manufactured in the U.S. are generally approved by [FM Global \(FM\)](#) and listed by [Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc. \(UL\)](#). Consider the types of fittings on fire extinguishers. Many service companies will not service and recharge extinguishers with plastic fittings because they may leak after they have been serviced. They will service extinguishers with metal fittings.

Be leery of purchasing a used fire extinguisher, especially if it is damaged. Fire extinguishers only hold a charge for so many years. The dry chemical in older models can clump and older fire extinguishers cannot be recharged. Unless a fire extinguisher has been properly maintained there is the possibility it would malfunction in an emergency.

The prices for extinguishers can range from \$35.00-\$75.00. Disposable fire extinguishers come with an expiration date or an indicating gauge. Once they have expired they should be properly recycled. Rechargeable residential fire extinguishers are made to be recharged. They have a gauge on them that indicates if they are charged or need recharging. There are several companies that provide this service. There are walk-in and drop off services available for residential fire extinguishers. See the list on the bottom of this article for more information.

When choosing a fire extinguisher you want to get a fire extinguisher that fits the location/area it will be placed in. Some fire extinguishers will be called "Kitchen or Garage" fire extinguishers. You would want to avoid using a small kitchen type extinguisher in the garage and a large garage fire extinguisher in the kitchen. Most A-B-C fire extinguishers are versatile and weigh about 5 pounds.

Depending on the size of the fire extinguishers there will be approximately 8-25 seconds of extinguishing agent, and they will have about a 12-20 foot extinguishing range. It is important to know your fire extinguishers capabilities. This information will help you make a good decision when faced with a fire. With some basic knowledge of the fire extinguishers in your home you will know in a fire emergency if you should attempt to use a fire extinguisher or if you should evacuate and call 9-1-1- immediately.

## Recommend Locations

In residential homes, the kitchen, garage, and furnace or boiler room are primarily where you should have fire extinguishers. If you have a workshop or business attached to your home it is a good idea to have a fire extinguisher located in those locations also.

Coast Guard approved fire extinguishers are required on boats where a fire hazard could be expected from the motors or the fuel system. An extinguisher should be put in motor and recreational vehicles, such as motor homes, campers, and trailers. It is good to have one in your personal vehicle also.

On farms or ranches place one in the barn by a centrally located door. Fire extinguishers should also be considered for sheds or out buildings with potential hazards. It is also recommended to have a fire extinguisher for a pool house, guest house, or any building where there is a risk of fire or where occupants could be at risk.

If you live in an apartment complex fire extinguishers should be provided in the hallways, community rooms with kitchens, and in parking garages. It is always a good idea to have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen of your apartment.

### **Placement**

When possible fire extinguishers should be mounted by outside doors or by the exit door out of the room it designated for. It should be accessible and not placed in a location where it will be used as a coat rack or buried behind storage. Know where the potential for fire is and make sure you mount the fire extinguisher accordingly. For example, in the kitchen mount it near an exit out of the kitchen. Since most kitchen fires occur on the stove top you want to make sure your fire extinguisher is in an area that is accessible and where you would not have to cross the path of the fire to get to your extinguisher. Never put yourself in a position where the fire is between you and an exit. Although most kitchen fires are on the stove top do not put the fire extinguisher near the stove as it will be out of your reach if the fire is on the stovetop. You should not have to risk burns just to reach your extinguisher.

Always mount your fire extinguisher with the bracket that is provided. This will assure it stays in a place, you can always find it, and it is not moved, tipped over or damage.

If you need additional help with placement of your fire extinguishers you can also call the Excelsior Fire District and ask for assistance.

### **When to use a Fire Extinguisher**

A fire extinguisher should be used when the people in your home are already being evacuated and someone is calling 9-1-1. Fire extinguishers are made to fight small, contained and not spreading fires. If you try to extinguish a fire that is too big you put yourself at risk and can waste valuable time by delaying a call to 9-1-1. Only fight the fire if you have an unobstructed escape route, never put the fire between you and an exit. Do not attempt to use a fire extinguisher if you do not know how to use it. If you have any doubt in your ability to fight the fire evacuate immediately and call 9-1-1.

### **How to Use a Fire Extinguisher**

When you bring a new fire extinguisher home read the manual and operating instructions. Make yourself familiar with the fire extinguisher.

The Excelsior Fire District offers free training classes to the residence and business owners in the Excelsior Fire District. Most fire extinguisher companies offer training class for a fee (see list of companies below). Once a year the Excelsior Fire District offers free hands on training during our Fire Prevention Open House and Safety Fair on October. Check the event page on this website for dates and times or call 952-960-1698.

Below are the basic steps on how to use a fire extinguisher.

**P - A - S - S** is an easy way to help you remember how to use a fire extinguisher.

**P** - Pull the pin

**A** - Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire

**S** - Squeeze the handle

**S** - Sweep the nozzle back and forth, walking towards the fire

Stand about 12-20 feet away from the fire, and walk towards it while spraying the extinguishing agent at the base of the fire.

Keep your back to a clear exit and stand six to eight feet away from the fire

After the fire is extinguished, watch to make sure the fire doesn't flare up again.

Always make sure to report any fire to the Excelsior Fire District by calling 9-1-1.

#### **Fire Extinguisher Care**

Once a fire extinguisher has been used, it cannot be used again unless it is serviced by a fire extinguisher company. The gauge on the fire extinguisher should always be in the green area - ready to go (charged). You can also choose to simply replace it with a new one.

Examine your extinguishers on a regular basis. Check to make sure the gauge is in the green "ready" area. Follow the manufacture instructions on how to maintain your fire extinguisher and if there are any annual recommendations to assure your extinguisher stays in working order

#### **Fire EXTINGUISHER disposal and recycling**

#### **\*Household one use/DISPOSABLE FIRE extinguishers**

#### **South Hennepin Recycling & Problem Waste Drop Off Center**

1400 West 96th Street

Bloomington, MN 55431

Call (612) 348-3777 Monday-Friday from 8 AM - 4:30 PM

No fees

#### **Directions from 35W:**

Go south on 35W and exit at 94th St. Turn right and go to James Avenue, then turn left (south) on James to 96th St. Turn left on 96th St. and go 1/4 mile. Facility will be on you

#### **Hennepin County Recycling Center and Transfer Station**

8100 Jefferson Highway

Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

**Call (612) 348-3777 Monday-Friday from 8 AM - 4:30 PM**

No fees

\*Hennepin County residence only

If you do not live in Hennepin County check with your city about local programs

**\*Commercial/ reusable /Rechargeable Fire Extinguishers**

**Xcel Energy**

612-630-4516

Fees per fire extinguisher start at 25.00 each

**Special Waste Products**

612-285-9865

2850 100th Court NE

Blaine, MN 55449

Contact for fees and special considerations

The Excelsior Fire District and Conway Minnesota provide FREE fire extinguisher recycling once a year in October at the Excelsior Fire District Fire Prevention Open House and Safety Fair. Check the events page on this website for more information.

**Fire Extinguishers Service companies**

Listed below in random order are a few fire extinguishers service companies that have a walk in-drop off fire extinguisher re-charging service, sell fire extinguishers, and recycle/disposal service. There are more companies to choose from by looking in the phone directory or on the internet.

Before making the trip to the locations below call first to make sure the fire extinguisher you have is rechargeable, what the walk in or drop off hours are and where they are, and the fees for the services.

**Minnesota Conway**

Fire extinguisher sales, walk- in recharging service, recycling of re-chargeable and disposable fire extinguishers

575 Minnehaha Ave W

Saint Paul, MN 55103-1573

(651) 288-0777

**Alert Fire & Safety**

Fire extinguisher sales drop off recharging service, recycling of re-chargeable and disposable fire extinguishers.

4188 Lancaster Lane

Plymouth, MN 55441

763-553-2022

*Simplex Grinnell*

Fire extinguisher sales, walk- in recharging service, recycling of re-chargeable and disposable fire extinguishers.

5400 Nathan Ln N # 100

Plymouth, MN 55442-2128

(763) 367-5000

**Weber & Troseth Inc**

Fire extinguisher sales, walk- in recharging service, recycling of re-chargeable and disposable fire extinguishers.  
1902 University Avenue West  
Saint Paul, MN 55104-3426  
(651) 645-1034

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