The PASS-word to Fire Extinguisher Use



Safety Talk

What's at Stake?

A fire is a frightening experience, but if you know how to operate a portable fire extinguisher and remember the PASS-word, you can fight back with confidence

What's the Danger?

When a fire breaks out, you only have minutes to escape so seconds count. Fire can engulf your home, office, warehouse, or other structure, in as little as two minutes. In addition to having an escape plan at home and an evacuation plan at work, knowing how to use a fire extinguisher can give you and others valuable seconds to escape.

How to Protect Yourself

First, always activate the building fire alarm to alert co-workers and customers first. Next, call the fire department or other emergency number. Only then try to fight the fire, and only if it is about the size of a wastepaper basket or smaller.

Here's your **PASS**-word to safety:

Pull the pin or remove the plastic locking strap.

- This action unlocks the lever and allows the extinguisher to be discharged.
- Be sure you have the correct type of extinguisher for the fire. For example, never use water on an electrical fire or you could risk an electrical shock.

Aim low at the base of the flames, not at the smoke.

- Keep the nozzle aimed low towards the base of the fire and stand a few feet back from the fire.

Squeeze the lever and the handle together to discharge the extinguisher.

- Release the lever when you want to stop discharging to check the state of the fire.

Sweep from side to side.

- Aim carefully as you only have about 10 to 20 seconds of extinguishing agent, depending on the size and type of extinguisher.

- Hit all sides of the fire and any stray spots.
- When the fire appears to be out, check for live embers.
- Watch for sudden flare-ups as the hot embers are exposed to the air.

Never attempt to fight a fire in an enclosed space such as a storage room.

- Smoke and gases from the fire, along with the contents of the extinguisher, could displace the oxygen and cause you to lose consciousness.
- Your escape route could also be cut off by fire or smoke.
- Fight the fire while backing toward the exit. Always leave yourself an escape route.
- Never allow yourself to be trapped in a room with only one exit.
- If the extinguisher does not put the fire out, you will have to leave quickly and safely.

Never go back into a fire for anything or anyone. Alert firefighters of anyone who may still be in the building and let them do their job.

Final Word

By planning ahead and knowing how to operate a portable fire extinguisher, you will stay calm and react quickly in an emergency. Take firefighting seriously – it could be your PASS-port to safety.