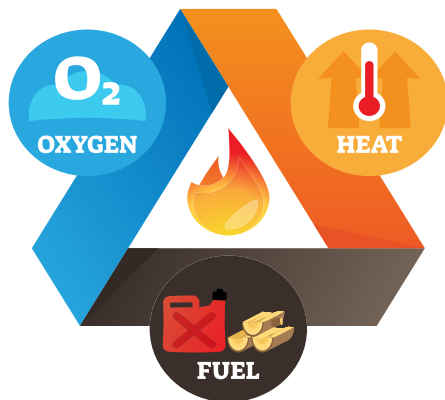


FIRE SAFETY & EXTINGUISHERS

IDENTIFY

All buildings, whether under construction or fully operational, must have a means to fight fires. The initial attack on a fire is key to prevent it from spreading and doing damage. Fire needs three key components to ignite and build: oxygen, heat, and fuel. If one of those items is removed from the fire, it cannot continue to burn.



When workers notice the initial stage of a fire, they should be trained to use the equipment available at the workplace in order to prevent its spread, as outlined in Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Regulation Part 19.2. This includes responding to the following:

- Seeing or smelling smoke.
- Seeing something on fire in the beginning stages where it is not out of control.

When doing hot work and/or when heat sources or sparks are part of the task, workers should be aware of their surroundings and if possible remove any combustibles or flammables from where the heat source may ignite them, or cover these materials with fire/heat resistant blankets.

COMMUNICATE

Workplaces must have a means of notifying anyone on the premises that an emergency is occurring. For construction sites where alarms are not yet installed, this is typically having an airhorn. During worker orientation, it will be discussed how many blasts are used to notify workers to evacuate the site and meet at the muster point.

For occupied buildings not under construction, an alarm system will be used that should include an audible alarm, and/or a visual alarm such as a strobe light. In absence of an alarm, workers can verbally notify others on site.

It is a good practice to hold annual fire drills at every workplace so the employer can ensure that everyone understands the safety protocols in case of a fire.

CONTROL

When hot work is being done, most construction sites will require a fire watch after the hot work is completed. The timeframe for this fire watch will vary depending on the prime contractor's or employer's policies. An appropriate fire extinguisher should be readily available — within arm's reach — of the hot work area.

It's also critical to be vigilant when using heaters during the winter months. Tarps and other combustible or flammable materials should be kept well away from the heater to prevent melting and igniting.

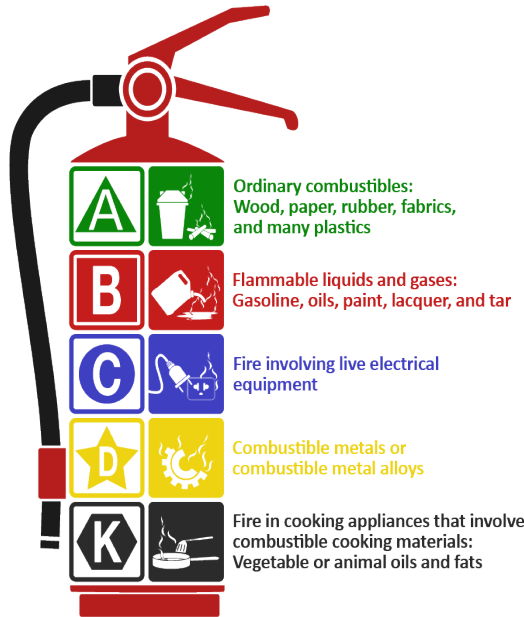
Any time a fire is burning, a means of putting it out must be readily available. This could be fire extinguishers, hoses, or another approved means. The general rule is if the initial fire cannot be extinguished within the first 30 seconds, you should evacuate the workplace and call the fire department. Workers should remember that for every second they try to extinguish a fire, that is one less second they have to evacuate the building. All buildings must follow the National Fire Code of Canada for the spacing and number of extinguishers required, including the following:

- Should not be more than 75 feet apart.
- Must be available on each stairwell entrance.
- Must be located at every access/egress point into the building.

FIRE SAFETY & EXTINGUISHERS

FACTS AND TIPS

Typically, the compound in a fire extinguisher will last five to 15 years. Extinguishers should be visually inspected every six months and checked annually by an approved supplier to ensure they have the correct psi charge and that the compound is in good condition.



Fire extinguishers are available in five classes – A, B, C, D, and K. “ABC” extinguishers are the most commonly used in workplaces. An extinguisher will only last for a very short amount of time. Workers should be aware of this; able to recognize the type and size of fire that has ignited; and trained to use the appropriate extinguisher.

2.5 pound extinguisher

- Will last 8 to 12 seconds.
- Will discharge horizontally between 5 to 8 feet.

5 pound extinguisher

- Will last 10 to 20 seconds.
- Will discharge horizontally between 5 to 20 feet.

10 pound extinguisher

- Will last 15 to 25 seconds.
- Will discharge horizontally between 5 to 20 feet.

THE QUIZ

1. What type of fires would you use a Class A extinguisher on?
a) Wood, paper
b) Electrical wiring, grease
c) Combustible metals
2. What is the maximum distance allowed between fire extinguishers?

3. What should be done before hot work begins?
a) Remove flammables and combustibles
b) Mark off your area with Caution tape
c) Put up a sign
d) Call the fire department
4. Which part of the WSH Regulation discusses fire hazards and the training requirement?
a) Part 14
b) Part 35
c) Part 8
d) Part 19
5. What is the typical time frame for initial attack of a fire before workers should evacuate?
a) 10 seconds
b) 30 seconds
c) 60 seconds
d) 20 seconds
6. What kind of alarm system is most common on a construction site to notify workers of an emergency?

7. How often should the fire drill be tested?

1. a; 2. 7.5 feet; 3. a; 4. d; 5. b; 6. Airhorn; 7. Annually

ANSWERS: