



## A guide to portable fire extinguishers

**Y**ou know that fire extinguishers are important and you understand their basic function. But are you aware whether your organization has extinguishers, and if so, which types are installed, where they're located, and how to correctly use and maintain them?

Portable fire extinguishers can be extremely effective with combating small fires within the workplace. However, not all extinguishers are the same. There are different classes for different types of fires. Proper selection and placement of extinguishers is extremely important. It's also essential that once installed, the units are carefully inspected and maintained, and all employees are trained on proper use.

### Types of Portable Fire Extinguishers

#### ■ Class A (most common)

- Identified by a green triangle containing the letter "A."
- Used for wood, paper, cloth, cardboard, and most ordinary combustibles.
- Contains water.

#### ■ Class B

- Identified by a red square containing the letter "B."
- Used for flammable liquids, such as oil, solvents, greases, and gases.
- Contains dry chemicals, carbon dioxide, or halogenated agents to smother the fire with foam.

#### ■ Class C

- Identified by a blue circle containing the letter "C."
- Used for energized electrical equipment, such as electrical boxes, panels, transformers, etc.
- Contains dry chemicals, carbon dioxide, or halogenated agents to smother the fire with powder.

#### ■ Class D

- Identified by a yellow five-pointed star containing the letter "D."
- Used for combustible metals.
- Contains dry powder agent (specific to the combustible metal involved).

#### ■ Class K

- Identified by the letter "K."
- Used for fats, grease, and oils in commercial kitchens.
- Contains wet chemicals (potassium acetate).

### Placement & Maintenance

- Select and position portable fire extinguishers based on the potential type and size of fire that can occur. Make sure size and spacing is in accordance with industry standards.
- Mount fire extinguisher units on brackets or in wall cabinets with the carrying handle placed 3.5 to 5 feet above the floor. Position larger units at lower heights with the carrying handle about 3 feet from the floor.

▶ *continued*

- Make sure your organization has a program that addresses the maintenance and inspection of fire extinguishers. Each month, the program should ensure that:
  - ▲ Extinguishers are in their assigned location, clearly visible, and not blocked or hidden by objects that would interfere with access.
  - ▲ Nameplates with operating instructions are legible and facing outward.
  - ▲ Pressure gauges indicate that the equipment is fully charged (in the green zone).
  - ▲ Pins and tamper seals are intact.
  - ▲ Equipment is in good condition - no physical damage, corrosion, or leaks.
  - ▲ If the powder in dry powder extinguishers becomes packed, it can be loosened by gently rocking the extinguishers from top to bottom.

### Employee Training

- Make sure that employees know and follow all fire safety rules. Communicate your organization's employee evacuation plan and conduct periodic fire drills.
- Provide specific guidelines for using portable fire extinguishers.
- Identify the location of all fire extinguishers within your facility and train employees about extinguisher parts and operation. Local fire departments or fire equipment distributors often offer hands-on fire extinguisher training. However, as a general rule, the 4-step PASS process can be used for operation:
  - ▲ **P**ull the pin.
  - ▲ **A**im the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
  - ▲ **S**queeze the handle slowly and evenly to discharge the material.
  - ▲ **S**weep the nozzle from side-to-side.
- Stress that safety is paramount. If there is ever an instance where life is threatened, instruct employees to immediately leave the facility.

— 5-minute Safety Talk  
National Security Council

### Safety & Loss Control Bulletin

The COLT Journeyman Refresher Program (JRP) 6000 series courses will be available in late 2017 and early 2018. Using strategically highlighted content from, and standards equal to, the COLT Power Lineworker Certification Program, these three-day, fast-paced workshops can be attended as *individual courses* or all three within a three-year period for a *Series 6000 Certificate*. Recommended certificate renewal time = 7 years following the last course taken.

#### COLT JRP 6000 Series Certificate:

JRP 6100 Wood Pole Fall Protection, Rope, & Electrical Test Equipment

JRP 6200 Overhead Personal Protective Grounding, Rigging, Safety Rules

JRP 6300 Distribution Transformer Connections & Troubleshooting

Registration is currently available for the 6000 Series Cohort through the Buckeye Power intranet.

*Keepsafe* is published monthly by the Safety and Loss Control Department of Ohio's Electric Cooperatives: Dwight Miller, CLCP, Director; Jason Woods - Consultant; Chris Napier - Consultant; Kyle Hoffman - COLT Instructor/Coordinator; Steve Savon, CSP, CLCP - Regulatory Consultant; Peggy Hieatt, Coordinator. Correspondence can be addressed to: OEC, Safety and Loss Control Department, 6677 Busch Blvd., Columbus, OH 43229 Phone: 614-846-5757 • Fax: 614-846-7108 E-mail: [phieatt@ohioec.org](mailto:phieatt@ohioec.org).

*Ohio's Electric Cooperatives is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



## Health Corner

### Fend off the flu this year by getting vaccinated.

**Remember, it takes two weeks for the vaccine to become effective.**

You're overworked and overtired. Maybe you haven't been sleeping well these past few weeks, and it seems like everyone around you is sniffing and coughing. Not a great recipe for staying healthy! While there's no magic bullet to ward off the common cold, you can put up a force field against the flu by getting vaccinated. The flu shot is your best protection against the three or four most likely influenza viruses this year—and, while it's not 100 percent effective, it will substantially lower your chances of getting the flu. Contrary to popular opinion, the flu shot cannot actually make you sick. The viruses used in the vaccine are dead. Just remember that it takes a full two weeks for your flu immunity to kick in, so the sooner you get the vaccine, the sooner you'll be protected. To find out where to get a flu shot in your area, visit the government's flu vaccine finder website, [flushot.healthmap.org](http://flushot.healthmap.org).

Source: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Tip