



Government  
of South Australia

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE

### HOME FIRE & LIFE SAFETY INFORMATION

For further advice contact the Community Safety and Resilience Department  
South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service on 8204 3611



# FIRE EXTINGUISHERS FOR DOMESTIC AND RECREATION USE

A fire extinguisher is a first attack tool for use in the early stages of a fire. It should only be used:

- on a small fire – eg no larger than a waste paper basket
- by someone who is confident and physically capable in the use of the extinguisher
- when the extinguisher is the correct type for the burning material (see Fire Extinguisher Chart)

Where-ever possible call for support and have someone call the Fire Service immediately on 000.

The safest and most efficient way to extinguish a contained cooking fire (eg a fat fire in the pan) is by using a fire blanket. (Please see Home Fire Safety Information Sheet “Fire Blankets”.)

#### Type

The recommended type of fire extinguisher for most situations in the home is a dry powder type with a minimum rating of 5B:E. This type of extinguisher is suitable for fires involving cooking oils and fats as well as electrical fires.

For cars, caravans and boats the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) recommends a Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 1A:20B:(E).

#### Size

A one kilogram (1kg) dry powder extinguisher is recommended for domestic use. If the fire cannot be extinguished using a 1kg extinguisher it is too large and you should evacuate.

#### Placement

The extinguisher should be mounted near the entrance or exit to the kitchen, as kitchens are where most domestic fires occur.

In a car, caravan or boat the extinguisher should be mounted near an exit, in a place where it can be easily accessed and used without putting the user in danger from the fire. You should always have an escape route behind you.

## Maintenance

At least every six months remove the extinguisher from its mounting bracket and shake it to ensure that the powder within has not compacted.

- Check that the pressure gauge is reading in the green zone to ensure that there is ample gas propellant to make the extinguisher work.
- Check for any other visible damage. Replace the extinguisher if you have any concerns. Replace the extinguisher, or have it serviced and pressure tested, when it reaches 10 years of age.
- On boats check for salt water corrosion.

## Know how to use the fire extinguisher

Familiarise yourself with the instructions on the fire extinguisher every time you examine it. An emergency is not the time to read extinguisher instructions.

When using the fire extinguisher.

1. Raise the alarm, summon help and have someone call the Fire Service on '000'.
2. Keep your escape path at your back. Never allow the fire to get between you and the escape path.
3. Remember the acronym **PASS**

<b>P =</b>	Pull	the pin
<b>A =</b>	Aim	the extinguisher nozzle at the base of flames
<b>S =</b>	Squeeze	the trigger while holding the extinguisher upright
<b>S =</b>	Sweep	the extinguisher or nozzle from side to side covering the base of the fire.

4. Observe the fire after the initial extinguishment. It may re-ignite.

The contents of small extinguishers may last as little as eight seconds and up to 60 seconds for larger extinguishers. The time to discharge an extinguisher depends on the type and size of the extinguisher.

Do not use (or continue to use) an extinguisher if:

- you are putting your life at risk
- the fire is larger than a waste paper basket
- the fire is spreading quickly beyond the point of origin
- the extinguisher is not having any effect or is having an adverse reaction on the fire
- you cannot extinguish the fire quickly (less than 30 seconds)
- you do not know what fuels are involved in the fire.

If any of the above circumstances apply then you should:

- close the door to contain the fire
- ensure everyone is out of the building
- ring the fire service on '000' from a phone outside of the building
- never go back into the building once out
- wait to meet the fire service.

**Remember** - Saving lives through a quick escape is far more important than saving property. The first priority must be evacuation and calling the fire service on 000.

When using an extinguisher in a boat ensure that:







- you turn the ignition off
- you are upwind
- you are in a position to leave the boat quickly with life jackets if you can't put the fire out.

When using an extinguisher in a car:

- turn the ignition off and apply the handbrake
- call for support to call 000 for the Fire Service
- ensure that you are upwind of the fire
- be aware of other traffic
- LPG powered cars - isolate the gas cylinder if you know how to and can do so safely
- if it is an engine fire pop the bonnet but DO NOT OPEN IT. Fire the extinguisher through the small gap
- leave the bonnet closed.

Also see Fire Blankets, Caravan Fire Safety, Recreational Marine Fire Safety, Recreational Vehicles, Extinguishing a Fire, and Car fire safety

# FIRE EXTINGUISHER CHART

TYPE	COLOUR	WHERE USED	COMMENTS
WATER	All red 	<b>Fire Class A</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood</li> <li>• Paper</li> <li>• Textiles</li> <li>• Rubbish etc.</li> </ul>	Dangerous when used on electrical, flammable liquid and cooking oil/fat fires.
FOAM	Red body, blue band 	<b>Fire Class A - B</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood</li> <li>• Paper</li> <li>• Textiles</li> <li>• Rubbish etc.</li> <li>• Flammable Liquids</li> </ul>	Dangerous if used on electrical fires.
WET CHEMICAL	Red body, cream band 	<b>Fire Class A - F</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood</li> <li>• Paper</li> <li>• Textiles</li> <li>• Rubbish etc.</li> <li>• Cooking Oils and Fats</li> </ul>	Dangerous if used on electrical fires.  <i>Protect eyes as this is highly corrosive.</i>
CARBON DIOXIDE	Red body, black band 	<b>Fire Class A - B - (E) - F</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood</li> <li>• Paper</li> <li>• Textiles</li> <li>• Rubbish etc.</li> <li>• Flammable Liquids</li> <li>• Live Electrical Equipment</li> <li>• Cooking Oils and Fats</li> </ul>	Not generally suited for outdoor use.  Small contained fires only.
DRY CHEMICAL	Red body, white band 	<b>Fire Class A - B - (E) Powder Extinguisher Type 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood</li> <li>• Paper</li> <li>• Textiles</li> <li>• Rubbish etc.</li> <li>• Flammable Liquids</li> <li>• Live Electrical Equipment</li> </ul>	Cars Boats Caravans
	Red body, white band 	<b>Fire Class B - (E) and can be used on F Class fires Powder Extinguisher Type 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flammable Liquids</li> <li>• Live Electrical Equipment</li> <li>• Cooking Oils and Fats</li> </ul>	Kitchen General Household

For further advice ring the Community Safety and Resilience Department 8204 3611  
Country callers 1300 767 637

e-mail [samfscommunitysafety@sa.gov.au](mailto:samfscommunitysafety@sa.gov.au)

visit our website [www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)

or call in to the Adelaide station at 99 Wakefield Street, Adelaide during business hours.