

Fire Extinguishers

A GUIDE FOR BUSINESS OWNERS



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Fire Extinguishers can be used by building occupants (employees or visitors) to put out a fire whilst it is still small. They are the most common form of fire safety equipment in buildings.

Fire Extinguisher Checklist

- Are there enough of the correct type of fire extinguishers?
- Are they located appropriate to fire hazards?
- Are the operating instructions clear and legible?
- Is the fire extinguisher accessible at all times?
- Is the fire extinguisher maintained correctly and provided with a maintenance tag?
- Have all staff been trained in the proper use of fire blankets?

What are the different types of fire extinguishers and why is it important to install the correct one?

There are many rules and regulations that relate to the installation, number, and type of fire extinguishers required in buildings. These guidelines ensure that fire extinguishers are readily accessible and located in a manner that does not pose hazards to potential users.

What are the different types of Fire Extinguishers?

For a fire extinguisher to be effective, it is extremely important that the correct type of fire extinguisher is provided to match the risk that is present.

| Current | Extinguishing Agent | A | B | C | E | F | Comments | D |
|---------|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| | | Wood Paper | Flammable & combustible Liquids | Flammable Gases | Electrically Energised | Cooking Oils and Fats | | Metal Fires |
| | Water | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | Dangerous if used on flammable liquid, energised electrical equipment and cooking oil/fat fires | Use only special purpose extinguishers and seek expert advice |
| | Wet Chemical | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | Dangerous if used on energised electrical equipment | |
| | Foam* | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | Limited | Dangerous if used on energised electrical equipment | |
| | Powder | (ABE) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Look carefully at the extinguisher to determine if it is BE or ABE unit as the capability is different | |
| | | (BE) | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| | Carbon Dioxide | Limited | Limited | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | Not suitable for outdoor use or smouldering deep seated A Class Fires | |
| | Vaporising Liquid | ✓ | Limited | Limited | ✓ | ✗ | Check the characteristics of the specific extinguishing agent. 5 yearly servicing must be done by ODS & SGG licensed persons | |
| | Fire Blanket | Limited | Limited | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | *Fire Blankets may be used as a thermal barrier against radiated heat and to control a fire in clothes being worn by a person | |

Where should I put a fire extinguisher?

Fire extinguishers should be put in easily accessible positions within the building. This means they should be located in areas where occupants can reach them quickly in the event of a fire emergency.

At the same time, the standard emphasises that fire extinguishers should not be positioned in locations where access could be hazardous to the user. This ensures that individuals attempting to use a fire extinguisher do not put themselves at risk while trying to reach it.

What signage am I required to provide?

“Fire Extinguisher” signs shows the location of a fire extinguisher in the case of an emergency.

To help people find fire extinguishers quickly and easily, signage must be:

- Clearly visible from a distance of up to 20 meters in all directions.
- Signage should be installed 2m or more above the floor level



Watch this Instructional Video:
How to use fire extinguishers.

What are fire extinguisher identification discs?

Fire extinguisher identification discs are used to label different types of fire extinguishers and communicate the type of fire they can be used for.

By providing clear labeling, people can quickly identify the appropriate extinguisher to use based on the type of fire there is.



Is there training available in the use of fire extinguishers?

All occupants of buildings should be trained in fire awareness and the safe and effective use of all fire safety equipment – including fire extinguishers.

CFA's Fire Equipment Maintenance team provides training to businesses. Contact us for more information: industry.training@cfa.vic.gov.au

Further information

Comprehensive guidelines can be found in **AS 2444 - Portable Fire Extinguishers and Fire Blankets**.

If you have any questions or need support, please contact CFA's Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Hotline on **1300 363 661**