

FARM FIRE SAFETY SHEET



Fire Extinguisher Selection, Location and Use

While not all of these items may be practical for every farm, the listed recommendations are universally endorsed by fire experts worldwide, and farms conforming to as many of these points as possible will be at much lower risk for fires.

Armed with the right type of fire extinguisher, a property owner can often extinguish or contain a fire before it becomes a major blaze.

To effectively fight a fire, an individual must be prepared with the right type of extinguisher, have it readily available, and know how to use it properly. Failure to be properly prepared to extinguish a fire not only reduces the chances of containing the blaze, but may also place the individual in an extremely hazardous situation.

If you lack the tools or the skills to fight a fire, no matter how small, get out of the building, call your local fire department and wait for them to arrive.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

There are several types of fire extinguishers available, but the best type for home and farm use is a multipurpose "ABC" type extinguisher. ABC type extinguishers generally use ammonium phosphate as the active chemical to extinguish a fire and are capable of putting out most common fires.

Extinguishers are rated for the type of fire they are made to extinguish.

A - Ordinary combustible materials such as wood, paper, hay, etc.

B - Flammable liquids such as gas, oil, grease and other petroleum products.

C - Electrical fires.

As this listing shows, an ABC type extinguisher is capable of extinguishing most fires. Multipurpose extinguishers are available in 2½, 5 and 10 pound sizes.

The larger the extinguisher the longer it takes to completely discharge. Because the discharge time for these sizes ranges from 8 to 25 seconds, a five-pound extinguisher is the minimum size that should be purchased.

When purchasing an extinguisher, make sure it is U.L. (Underwriters Laboratories) or F.M. (Factory Mutual Laboratories) approved. Extinguishers with these labels are manufactured to meet recognized safety and

performance standards. Contact your local fire department for additional information about purchasing an extinguisher to meet your specific needs.

PURPOSES AND LOCATIONS FOR FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

The main reasons for having fire extinguishers readily available are to:

1. Suppress a fire along an escape route so trapped persons can exit a burning structure.
2. To extinguish or contain a fire from the time it is discovered until the arrival of fire department personnel.

FARM BUILDINGS

Farm buildings and farm equipment should be equipped with fire extinguishers.

The farm shop is a particularly fire prone area due to the types of equipment used. Welders and cutting torches can quickly ignite any combustible material.

At least one 10-pound ABC extinguisher should be wall-mounted in the shop for easy accessibility.

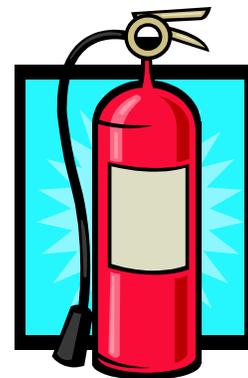
It is a good practice to have at least one ABC type extinguisher in all farm buildings and in other areas where there is a risk of a fire, such as around grain drying and processing equipment.

TRACTORS, COMBINES AND OTHER MACHINES

Fire extinguishers should also be mounted on tractors, combines, trucks and other equipment. Because most fires associated with these types of equipment are from petroleum products or electrical fires, a ten-pound ABC will be adequate.

To cut down the cost of purchasing several extinguishers, mounting brackets can be attached to equipment and the extinguisher can be transferred from seasonal equipment when it is to be stored for several months.

(The USDA is an equal opportunity employer.)



FIRE EXTINGUISHER OPERATING PROCEDURES

When a fire occurs, follow these general rules:

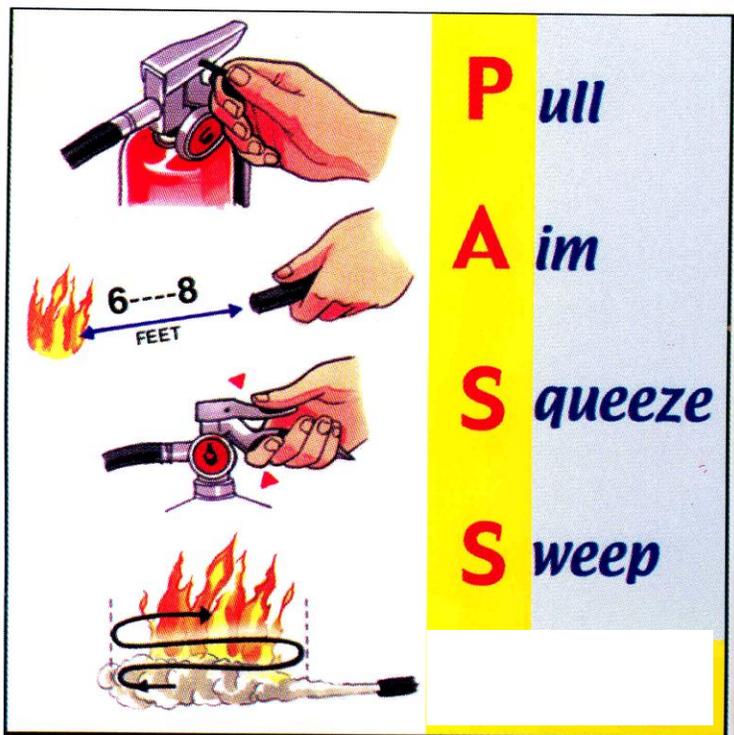
1. Make sure everyone gets out of the building.
2. Call the fire department immediately. Fires can spread quickly -- if you are unsuccessful in putting out a fire, the time you spend trying to extinguish a blaze may allow it to spread to other buildings. If your farm is difficult to find or off a main road, keep a complete set of directions posted by the telephone to instruct fire department personnel to your location. Precious seconds can be lost if you are required to stop and think about the quickest route to the farm. Most individuals can be easily confused during a stressful situation.
3. After calling the fire department, if the fire is still small, decide if you or someone else should risk trying to control the fire. Smoke and gases released from a fire can be toxic, so never attempt to put out a fire if you have any doubts about your ability to extinguish it. Wait for fire department personnel who have the proper equipment and are trained in fire fighting procedures.

If you elect to put out a fire and it grows too large to control, back out of the building. Never turn your back on a fire. Close the door behind you to limit oxygen in the building and wait until help arrives.

To Operate a Fire Extinguisher:

USE THE P.A.S.S. METHOD

1. Take extinguisher from mounting bracket.
2. Remove locking pin, ring, clip, level, etc. Get into a crouching position on the upwind side of the fire.
3. Point extinguisher nozzle at base of fire and squeeze the lever or handle.
4. Discharge using a sweeping motion from side to side at the base of the fire.



Having fire extinguishers in your home and on your farm does not relieve you and family members from the responsibility of taking precautions to prevent fires, nor do fire extinguishers take the place of trained fire department personnel.

A fire extinguisher is designed to reduce the chances of injury and death to you and family members during the time it takes to leave the structure and for trained help to arrive in the event of a fire.

Smoke detectors are essential to early detection of a fire. Install and maintain them according to manufacturer's instructions.

*This information was developed with the assistance of
Michigan State University Extension
The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)*

