

Article for November 19, 2014

Paper on fire!!! Do you just grab any extinguisher? Do you even have a fire extinguisher close to your workspace? Do you have any in your home? Vehicle? Boat? Camper? Church?

Fire extinguishers can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives. But when it comes to extinguishers, one type does not fit all! There are five primary types of fire extinguishers – and each one is designed to put out different kinds of fires.

Type A is for use with materials like cloth, wood and paper. Type B is for use with combustible and flammable liquids like grease, gasoline, oil and oil-based paints. Type C is for use with electrical equipment like appliances, tools, or other equipment that is plugged in. Type D is for use with flammable metals like aluminum, magnesium, and titanium. Type K (you didn't see that coming, did you?) is for use with vegetable oils, animal oils and fats in cooking appliances.

So, considering your office, vehicle, or home, do you know which type you should have on hand? Thankfully, there are also "multi-purpose" fire extinguishers that are labeled "A-B-C" or "B-C". These are ones that are best suited for home use and can be found at most home improvement stores, safety businesses or oilfield supply stores.

The U.S. Fire Administration recommends that only those trained in the proper use and maintenance of fire extinguishers consider using them when appropriate! When using an extinguisher, be sure to follow the "PASS" method. P – Pull the pin, A – Aim low, S – Squeeze the handle, and S – Sweep from side to side. If you do not think you would be able to safely put the fire out in five seconds using an extinguisher, do not attempt to use it! Leave the area and call 9-1-1 for assistance. As always, Be Safe Out There!