

Portable Fire Extinguishers: Added protection for your home

This past weekend while doing some spring-cleaning around my house I inspected my two portable fire extinguishers to make sure they were in good condition.

They were nonrechargeable (disposable) extinguishers, only two years old, and the charge arrow registered in the green. A little dusting and they looked like new.

This reminded me that in addition to working smoke detectors, every household should have UL Listed fire extinguishers strategically placed in rooms such as the kitchen, garage or workshop.

Don't just hang your extinguisher on the wall or in the cupboard! Plan ahead, read the instruction manual and know your extinguisher's capabilities before trying to fight a fire. Portable fire extinguishers are useful for putting out small fires, but recognize the limits of the extinguisher. There are four types of household extinguishers:

- Type A are suitable for use on fires involving combustible materials such as wood, cloth and paper.
- Type B are suitable for use on flammable liquid fires, including kitchen grease
- Type C are suitable for use on fires involving energized electrical equipment.
- Type ABC are suitable for use on all three types of fires listed above.

If a fire breaks out, you should first get everyone out of the house and call 9-1-1. If the fire is not spreading and is confined to a small area, use the appropriate type extinguisher for the fire if it is safe to do so. Know both your limits and the fire extinguisher's limits, and always aim the extinguisher at the base of the fire.

Periodically inspect your extinguishers to determine if they need to be recharged or replaced. Extinguishers need to be recharged or replaced after each use — even if you haven't used all the extinguishing agent.

Now, back to the rest of my spring-cleaning.



Managing Editor

