
What services does EHS&EM provide for this program?

- Consultation on the proper use of portable fire extinguishers
- Hands-on training with portable fire extinguishers
- Inspection of facilities for fire safety issues

Who may I contact to find out more?

You may contact the Environmental, Health Safety & Emergency Management Office at (434) 395-2940, or on our website at <http://www.longwood.edu/safety/index.html>.



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H E A L T H A N D
S A F E T Y S E R V I C E S

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Fire and Life Safety Program

Portable Fire Extinguisher Use



What are portable fire extinguishers really for?

Portable fire extinguishers (PFE's) are found in all buildings on campus. Their main purpose is to provide protection to building occupants during evacuation in the event of a fire emergency. Another purpose is so that properly trained personnel might extinguish a small fire before it can grow larger and endanger other building occupants.

As an employee, am I expected to use these extinguishers to put out a fire before evacuating the area?

No. Employees are expected to evacuate the building, unless it is specifically part of your job description that you will attempt to control a fire. However, if you are properly trained to use a PFE and can evaluate the situation and extinguish a fire, then you may do so. The choice is yours.

Are certain employees required to be trained in the use of PFEs?

Yes. Certain employees are required to attend portable fire extinguisher safety training:

- Those who have specific duties as part of an Employee Action Plan;
- Ushers and attendants at large public gatherings;
- Those who work in laboratories;
- Those involved in construction and renovation work, especially those performing utility and "hot work" (e.g., welding, cutting, brazing, and grinding).
- Powered industrial truck operators.

Where can I get Portable Fire Extinguisher training?

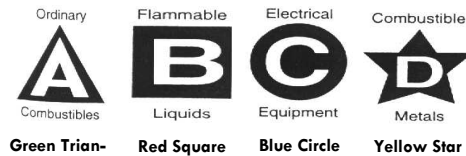
Visit the EHS&EM website for the fire extinguisher

training schedule or contact the EHS&EM office to schedule a training date.
<http://www.longwood.edu/safety/16951.htm>

Fire is fire, right? Aren't all fires the same?

Not at all. There are four main classifications of fire:

- Class "A" or ordinary combustibles, such as wood, paper, plastic, rubber, and cloth.
- Class "B" or flammable and combustible liquids and gases, such as hydrocarbon and alcohol based liquids and gases that will support combustion.
- Class "C" or electrical in nature. This includes fires involving energized electrical equipment.
- Class "D" or combustible metals, such as zirconium, titanium, potassium, and magnesium.



Fire extinguishers all look the same to me...are they?

No. PFE's come in many types, sizes, shapes, and colors. The three most common types of PFE on campus are:

A:B:C Multi-Purpose Dry Chemical, Stored Pressure Type These are **most commonly found** and can be used on all classes of fire except combustible metals. They range in size from 2 ½ lbs. to 20 lbs. and have an effective range of 5 to 20 feet.



Dry Chemical



Water

2 ½ Gallon Water Extinguisher These are for Class A fires only, and they have an effective range of 30 to 40 feet.

Carbon Dioxide (CO2) Extinguisher These are for small Class B or C fires only. They range in size from 5 lbs. to 20 lbs., and their effective range is 3 to 8 feet.



Carbon Dioxide

How do I use one of these things, anyway?

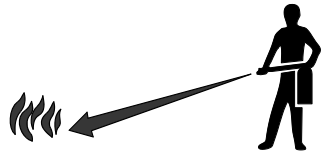
It is very important that the proper type of PFE is used on the correct classification of fire. A wrong one could make things worse. If you feel comfortable with your ability and the circumstances, you can be very effective with the right PFE. The main thing to remember is to **P.A.S.S.:**

PULL the pin.

AIM the hose or nozzle.

SQUEEZE the lever releasing the extinguishing agent.

SWEEP the agent back-and-forth at the base of the flames.



Are there times when I should definitely not use a PFE?

Yes:

- If you are not trained to use PFE.
- If you don't know what is burning.
- If the fire is spreading rapidly.
- If you might need personal protective equipment.
- If smoke or heat has filled the area.
- If you don't have a clear path of exit.
- If you are uncomfortable with the circumstances.
- If your instincts tell you not to.

This is also known as making a "fight or flight" decision. Always follow your instincts, and if any of the conditions above are present--**FLEE!**