

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

## Kitchen Fire Extinguishers



**Fire! Where's the fire extinguisher?** Knowing where a fire extinguisher is and how to use it are essential aspects of food and kitchen safety. Be prepared by purchasing the right type of extinguisher and knowing how to properly store, use, and inspect it.

### Types

The type of fire an extinguisher can put out is based on a letter system, as seen in the table below.

Multipurpose fire extinguishers may be labeled with a combination of letters such as B-C or A-B-C. Common household extinguishers are labeled 'ABC'.

Most kitchen fires involve grease. A fire extinguisher with only a class A label will not work on a grease fire. **Make sure fire extinguishers for the kitchen are labeled with B or K.**

All fire extinguishers should have a seal that indicates an independent testing laboratory has tested it. Often the seal is a UL label.



| TYPE OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS | BEST USED FOR  | USE IN  |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>A</b>                   | Cloth, wood, and paper   | Homes and businesses  |
| <b>B</b>                   | Combustible and flammable liquids, such as grease, oil, and oil-based paints | Homes and businesses  |
| <b>C</b>                   | Plugged-in electrical equipment, such as appliances and tools                | Homes and businesses  |
| <b>D</b>                   | Flammable metals   | Factories   |
| <b>K</b>                   | Vegetable oils, animal oils, and fats in cooking appliances                  | Commercial kitchens, restaurants, cafeterias, and catering businesses |

Source: U.S. Fire Administration, [usfa.fema.gov](https://www.usfa.fema.gov), 2017



## Extinguisher size

Choose a fire extinguisher that is large enough for a small fire but not heavy. For home use, a 5-pound fire extinguisher is generally recommended.

## Installation and storage

Install fire extinguishers close to exits, and keep them at least 30 feet from the stove, if possible.

Do not store your fire extinguisher in a cabinet or a hard-to-reach place in the kitchen. In an emergency, it should be easy to grab.

## Using a fire extinguisher

Keep your back to exits when using the device.

- **(P)** Pull the pin.
- **(A)** Aim the nozzle low towards the base of the fire, standing at least 6 feet from the fire.
- **(S)** Squeeze the lever slowly and hold it.
- **(S)** Sweep the nozzle from side-to-side while moving toward the fire.

If the fire does not go out immediately, leave the area. Call the fire department anytime you need to use a fire extinguisher.

## Monthly inspection

Inspect the fire extinguisher once a month.

- Check the pressure gauge of the extinguisher to ensure it's still in a safe operating range.
- Inspect for physical damage to the hoses and nozzles, and check for rust or dents. Clean the outside to remove dust or grease.
- Lift the extinguisher to make sure it is full. If it is light, it may have a leak.
- Shake chemical extinguishers once a month to prevent the chemicals within from solidifying and settling. Read the label on the extinguisher.
- Check the label or attached tag for an expiration date. According to National Fire Protection Association standards, rechargeable fire extinguishers are good for 6 years, and disposable fire extinguishers are good for 12 years.

## RESOURCES

**National Fire Protection Association.** (2020). *Cooking*. Retrieved November 22, 2020, from [bit.ly/2Q5884U](https://bit.ly/2Q5884U)

**U.S. Fire Administration.** (2017). *Choosing and using a fire extinguisher*. Retrieved November 20, 2020, from [bit.ly/2ZR6lhh](https://bit.ly/2ZR6lhh)

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