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METROPOLITAN EDUCATION DISTRICT

MetroED Employee Safety Newsletter



How to Use a Hand Held Fire Extinguisher

Fire can spread with lightning speed, consuming everything in its path and threatening lives and properties. Handheld fire extinguishers stop fire in its tracks, preventing small fires from becoming large ones. Knowing how to safely operate a handheld fire extinguisher leaves you better prepared for a fire-related emergency and may greatly reduce damage.

Remember PASS

Stand roughly 8 feet from the fire and hold the extinguisher in one hand. Make sure you have an escape route that you can easily access without heading past the fire.

P

Pull the pin on the fire extinguisher to release the handle. Toss the pin aside.

A

Aim the hose of the extinguisher at the base of the fire, not at the smoke or flames.

S

Squeeze the handle firmly.

S

Sweep the contents of the extinguisher back and forth across the base of the fire, maintaining even pressure on the handle.

Stop spraying the extinguisher once the fire has gone out and call 911 for help if needed.

Tips

It takes about one minute to fully empty the average fire extinguisher. Don't continue emptying the extinguisher once the fire is out, however, as you are left with no firefighting material if the flames were to reignite.

Know your fire extinguisher types. Class A units are designed for paper, cloth and plastic, while Class B fights oil and grease fires. Class C is for electrical fires only, while Class K is designed for use in the kitchen. Some models can be used for more than one class, but always read the tags and familiarize yourself with the extinguishers at home and work so you're ready if a fire breaks out.

Warnings

Never attempt to fight a large fire with a handheld extinguisher. These small devices are designed for putting out small fires centered around a single object. Call the fire department and let firefighters handle larger fires.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY EXTENSION CORDS

Blocked breakers aren't the only electrical hazard frequently seen at sites. Many electrical hazards spotted are related to inappropriate use of extension cords.

It is often witnessed "daisy-chaining" – using multiple extension cords or power strips for a device. Although extension cords can be useful for temporarily supplying power for certain operations, the key word is "temporarily." When a cord is used for several weeks or months OSHA doesn't consider the use temporary. This opens the door for a violation.

Beyond that, extension cords lying on the ground for extended periods of time are a trip hazard. They also can be subject to traffic abuse if run over by forklifts or feet, which can wear down insulation and create shock hazards. When cords are daisy-chained, they can easily overdraw electricity from the circuits, causing the wires to heat up and potentially result in a fire.

Sites should assess whether extension cords are truly being used for temporary measures – perhaps to power a fan on an especially hot day. In such an event, the cord should be gathered up at the end of the day and stored. It is recommended periodically inspect extension cords, and training employees to ensure the cords stay in good working condition and worn-out cords are placed out of service.

Workers need to ensure they're using the right extension cord for the job. Typically, a more expensive cord has a heavier gauge, which allows it to take more power without getting hot. The same applies for using a single power strip to plug in several different devices – the power strip may not be rated for the combined wattage needed for all the high-draw appliances being plugged in.

Roughly 3,300 fires originate in extension cords each year, killing 50 people and injuring 270 more. Extension cords can overheat and cause fires when used improperly, so keep these important tips in mind to protect your home and workplace.



SAFETY PLANS

MetroED's OSHA safety plans, Asbestos Hazard Evaluation Response Analysis (AHERA) SB187 Comprehensive Emergency Response Safety Plans, and SDS link are located on the website in the Safety folder on the Home page.

Other resources available to all employees are:

Safety Newsletters

Safety Committee

Bargaining Unit contracts

Bargaining Unit representative

Human Resources and/or Supervisor

Internet links: OSHA, EPA, DPR, HSA

Employees should be able to answer any question or concern they have by using the available resources.

DISINFECTING WIPES

Please remember any employee using a disinfectant must have passed the Healthy Schools Act Integrated Pest Management training course. If you need to take the course this year, please contact Human Resources. A link will be provided to you for the Keenan Safe Schools modules.

Disinfecting wipes are pesticides and must be used according to label directions.

Disinfecting wipes are antimicrobial products that are used to kill germs. Many teachers and other school staff use disinfecting wipes daily for health and safety purposes. Disinfecting wipes are registered pesticides and like all pesticides, must be used according to the label directions, including keeping them out of the reach of children 18 years or younger.

All school staff who use disinfecting wipes are required to participate in training to learn about the safe use of pesticides.