

REED COLLEGE
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
PRESENTS



Your Health, Your Safety: Our Concern



Playing With Fire:

Smoke Detectors and Fire Extinguishers

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Every year in the U.S., fires kill approximately 4,000, injure 20,000, and cause about \$10 billion in property damage. In fact, fires kill more people in the U.S. than all other natural disasters combined. Having and maintaining smoke detectors and fire extinguishers can save lives.

Smoke Detectors

Most fatalities from fires occur in the home when residents inhale smoke and toxic gases while sleeping, which can incapacitate residents. A smoke detector is integral for saving lives in a fire—having one decreases your risk of death in a fire by nearly half. The following are things you should know about owning and maintaining a fire detector.

Location: For minimum protection, locate smoke detectors in hallways between bedrooms and the rest of the home and in the center of the ceiling above stairways on every level of your home.

For better protection, additional fire detectors should be located in each bedroom and area where people sleep in the middle of the ceiling.

Maintenance: After installation, smoke

detectors need the following periodic attention to remain functional:

- Every Month test your smoke detector by following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Every Year dust your smoke detector and replace its battery. Additionally, replace the battery and reset the smoke detector if the alarm starts making a "chirping" noise.
- Every Ten Years replace the smoke detector. It is a good idea to write the purchase date on the detector if it isn't already labeled, because the time period is so long.



Installing a Detector

- Consider purchasing a dual sensor smoke detector. There are two types of detectors: ionization detector best identify fast burning fires and photoelectric detectors best identify slow, smoldering fires. A dual sensor detector gives warning about both types of deadly fires.
- Never remove batteries from your detector to use in other appliances or if the detector alarms inappropriately, such as when cooking. You may forget to replace the batteries.

- Install detectors away from air vents, air conditioners, heaters, and stoves. Also, place wall detectors between 4 and 12 inches from the ceiling and more than 4 inches from corners.

Fire Extinguishers

Having and knowing how to use a fire extinguisher can be central to saving a life or saving your home or office from fire damage especially in emergencies, such as earthquakes, when fire fighters may not arrive quickly.

Should You Fight the Fire?




Before deciding to fight any fire make sure that

- The area is evacuated and the fire department has been called.
- There is an unobstructed escape route at your back.
- You have the correct extinguisher for the job and you know how to use it.
- The fire is smaller than a wastebasket.

The ABC's of the Right Extinguisher:

Using the wrong type of fire extinguisher for a fire is dangerous.

The different classes of fire extinguishers are:

- Class A: Labeled in green, this is useful for ordinary combustibles such as paper, wood, cloth, and most trash. 
- Class B: Labeled in red, this is used for flammable liquids such as oil, gas, greases and paints. 
- Class C: Labeled in blue, this extinguisher is used for electrical equipment, such as wiring, fuse boxes, motors, and other appliances. 
- Class D and K: These extinguishers are used for combustible metals and commercial cooking oils, respectively.

In most situations, multipurpose ABC fire extinguisher, good for classes A, B, and C, is the most practical to own. However, In some circumstances, such as with special electronics equipment,

use an extinguisher covering only one class.

PASS the Fire Extinguisher, Please: After deciding to fight a fire, there is an easy acronym to remember that describes how to fight a fire: PASS.

- Pull the pin, or release the locking mechanism of the extinguisher.
- Aim the nozzle of the extinguisher at the base of the fire. Aiming too high will not extinguish the fire.
- S q u e e z e or press the handle, releasing a stream of extinguishing agent.
- Sweep the stream from side to side at the base of the fire until it appears to be out, paying close attention that the fire does not reignite.



How to Store a Fire Extinguisher

- Securely hang the extinguisher upright, near a door, and near rooms where fires are likely (ie: the kitchen).
- Check the extinguisher annually.
- Replace or refill the extinguisher after use.

Alternatives: If you do not have a fire extinguisher, the following items can be used to stop fires:

- Baking soda for cooking fires
- A garden hose for ordinary combustibles
- Buckets stored near water sources for ordinary combustibles.
- Shovels to spread dirt over a fire.

For this information and more on smoke detectors and fire extinguishers check out:

<http://www.FireSafety.gov>
<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov>
<http://www.RedCross.org>