

# Fire Extinguisher — PASS in 4 Steps + 2 Rules

Most workplace fires double in size every 30 seconds. PASS — Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep — is the OSHA-recognized technique for portable fire extinguisher use. Two additional rules tell you when to fight and when to evacuate.

## 01 P — Pull the pin

Pull the safety pin from the handle. This breaks the tamper seal and unlocks the operating lever. Hold the extinguisher upright by the carry handle, not the discharge nozzle or hose.

NFPA 10 · §1910.157(g)

## 02 A — Aim at the base

Aim the discharge nozzle, horn, or hose at the BASE of the fire — not the flames. Stand 6 to 8 feet back from the fire, with an unobstructed exit behind you. Aiming at flames wastes agent and does nothing to stop combustion.

NFPA 10 · §1910.157(g)

## 03 S — Squeeze the handle

Squeeze the operating lever slowly and evenly to discharge the agent. Releasing the handle stops the discharge. A typical 5 lb ABC extinguisher empties in 8 to 15 seconds — use it deliberately, not in panic bursts.

NFPA 10

## 04 S — Sweep side to side

Sweep the nozzle side to side across the base of the fire until it is fully extinguished. Move closer as the flames diminish. Watch for re-ignition and be prepared to reapply agent or evacuate.

NFPA 10

## DECISION RULE

## 05 Only fight if ALL are true

The fire is small and contained. You have a clear escape route behind you. You have the right class of extinguisher (A, B, C, D, or K) for the fuel. The alarm has been pulled and others are evacuating. You are trained.

§1910.157(b)(1)–(2)

## STOP · GO

## 06 When to evacuate

Evacuate if the fire is spreading, you cannot see the seat of the fire, smoke fills the area, you run out of agent, or your escape route is threatened. Close doors behind you and meet at the muster point. Never re-enter for property.

§1910.157(b)(1), §1910.38

Need annual extinguisher inspections, hands-on PASS training, or an emergency action plan review?

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