

Activity A1

Fire!

Fires are always a serious hazard, particularly in confined spaces, where the indirect effects, such as fumes, can be an additional health hazard. This activity will help you understand how you can help reduce the risk of fire.

Learning objectives

By the end of this activity you should be able to:

- describe the common types of fire extinguisher
- select the correct type of extinguisher to fight different fires.

Everyone should know the procedures to be followed if there is a fire at work. This should be part of your company induction but it is up to you to find out.

Find the fire action sign where you work. There is an example below.

Check what you **must** do, and what you **must not** do.



What to do in the event of a fire

If you discover a fire you should:

- operate the nearest fire alarm
- leave the building by the nearest exit
- report to the appropriate assembly point.

You should not stop to collect any personal belongings or re-enter the building until it is safe to do so.

Reducing fire risk

Good management is the best way to reduce fire risks. For example:

- maintain all electrical appliances safely
- remove combustible materials outside to a safe place
- maintain all gas supplies carefully
- store flammable materials in flame-proof metal cabinets
- have procedures to be followed if there is a fire
- make sure everyone knows what the procedures are
- put up signs and notices so people know what to do
- have regular evacuation drills
- keep fire exits clear
- test fire alarms regularly.

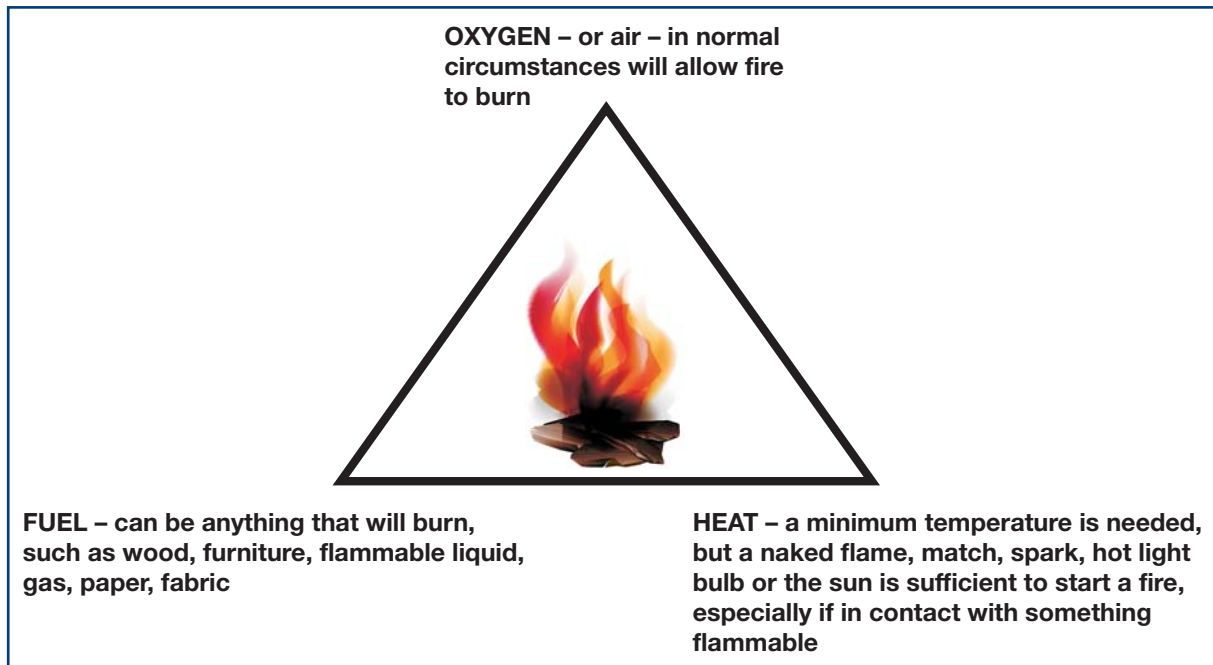


Everyone can help reduce the risks associated with fire by:

- only smoking in designated areas
- disposing of cigarettes carefully
- good housekeeping: clear up after yourself
- keeping fire exits clear
- knowing the evacuation procedure, escape routes and appropriate assembly point(s).

What makes a fire?

All of the three elements below need to be present for a fire to start. If you remove one of these elements you will be able to put a fire out.



Stage 1

Look carefully at the pictures of fire extinguishers and the fire blanket on the next page. Work out the use of each type of fire extinguisher and memorise their colour codes. Work with a partner and test each other carefully until you each get it right every time.

Stage 2

When you can show your teacher or trainer that you are confident at this, go with your group to find as many fire extinguishers and fire blankets as you can in your work area. Take a floor plan and locate and label:

- type of fire extinguishers and fire blankets
- other fire equipment that you find.

Check when the equipment was last tested and if is correctly secured.

Be prepared to display and explain your labelled plan in a feedback session.

Stage 3

To test your understanding, go to the 'Know your fire extinguisher colour codes' checklist and complete it on your own. Try to do this without using the diagram of the fire extinguishers.

Finally, exchange your checklist with a colleague to assess and give feedback.

Know your fire extinguisher colour code

Water

For use on:

A

Wood, paper
textiles etc.

B

Flammable
liquids

Do not use on

B

Flammable
liquids

Live electrical
equipment

Foam

For use on:

A

Wood, paper
textiles etc.

B

Flammable
liquids

Do not use on

B

Flammable
liquids

Live electrical
equipment

CO₂
Carbon dioxide

For use on:

B

Flammable
liquids

Live electrical
equipment

Do not use in
a confined
space

Dry
Powder

For use on:

A

Wood, paper
textiles etc.

B

Flammable
liquids

Live electrical
equipment

Wet
Chemical

For use on:

A

Wood, paper
Textiles etc.

F

Cooking oil
fires

Fire
Blanket

Use for
smothering
fires

For use on:

Kitchen fires

Clothing fires

Know your fire extinguisher colour code

Cylinder colour coding and contents

Classification of
Fire Risk



Water	Foam	CO ₂ Carbon dioxide	Dry Powder	Wet Chemical	Fire Blanket
Unsafe all voltages	Unsafe all voltages	Safe all voltages	Safe all voltages	Safe all voltages	
Use on: wood, paper textiles etc.	Use on: flammable liquids	Use on: flammable liquids	Use on: flammable liquids	Use on: oil and fats	Use on: kitchen fires clothing fires

A Paper, Wood, Textile and Fabric						
B Flammable Liquids						
C Flammable Gases						
F Oil and Fats						
 Electrical Hazards						
 Vehicle Protection						

Colour coding in accordance with BS EN3: 1996 – portable fire extinguishers.
Flammable gas fires must be extinguished by the emergency services only.