



## Classes of fire, types and use of Fire Extinguishers

Fire kills over 1000 people every year and injures many more. It destroys property and costs millions of pounds in insurance claims.

Once a fire has started, it is important to understand the types of fire extinguishers and classes of fire they can be used on.

### Classes of Fire:

#### **Class A: Carbonaceous Materials (Solids)**

- Cardboard, paper, cloth etc
- Wood.
- Dirty and oily rags.
- Packaging materials.

A water fire extinguisher should be used, with the jet of water aimed at the base of the fire and then progressively moved over the whole burning area.

#### **Class B: Flammable Liquids**

- Petrol or diesel.
- Oils.
- Paraffin.
- Solvent based paint.
- Resins and adhesives.

A foam fire extinguisher should be used. Direct the extinguisher and the back of the container to allow a blanket to build up and spread across the surface.

Never use water on a liquid fire as it will react violently and may result in an explosion.

#### **Class C: Flammable Gases**

- Liquid petroleum gas (LPG)
- Propane.
- Butane.
- Natural gas.

These fires can be dealt with a dry powder fire extinguisher. There is always a risk of explosion, so extreme caution is required.

If a fire starts, call the fire brigade and attempt to turn the gas off. If that is not possible then try and cool the cylinder with water until the fire brigade arrive.

If you are unsure whether you can deal with this situation, then evacuate and wait for the fire brigade.



### Class D: Combustible Metals

- Phosphorus.
- Sodium.
- Magnesium.

Fighting these fires are best dealt with trained persons and specially formulated powders. Never look directly into the fire as it may damage the eyes due to intense brightness.

Never use water as this may cause an explosion.

Electrical Fires:

These fires can be dealt with a Co2 fire extinguisher.

Attempt to switch off the electricity supply before fighting the fire and do not approach closer than one metre of the fire, where the supply has not been switched off.

Never use water on an electrical fire as there is a risk of electrocution.