



FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

BE PREPARED: **Choosing and Using a Fire Extinguisher**

HAVE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER? Gold star!

But how much do you know about it? Where is it? What type? How old (is it expired)? And most important, do you know when and how to use it? Here are a few basics:

Types:

There are different extinguishing agents for various types of fires (like wood/paper, combustible liquids, or electrical equipment). Multipurpose extinguishers cover the most common types of residential fires (“A-B-C”). Always look for a “UL Listed” or “ULC Listed” label, and select the largest device you can comfortably operate.

- **Non-rechargeable** fire extinguishers are for one-time use and typically have a plastic vs. metal valve at the top.
- **Rechargeable** fire extinguishers have a metal valve and can be recharged once they are used, or when they lose pressure over time. [Tech Fire Protection](#) and [Edison Fire Protection](#) are two local companies certified to service/recharge fire extinguishers.

When to Use:

Use a fire extinguisher when you can answer “yes” to these questions:

- Have I alerted others in my home or apartment that there is a fire?
- Has someone called the fire department?
- Do I know how to use the extinguisher and am I physically able to do so?
- Is the fire small and contained in a single object or to a surface (like a pan or a wastebasket)?
- Am I safe from the fire's toxic smoke?
- Do I have a clear escape route?

If you're unsure about the above, leave the building and call 911 from a mobile or neighbor's phone.

How to Use:

Remember the word **PASS**

- **P**ull the pin and release the locking mechanism.
- **A**im low. Point the nozzle at the base of the fire.
- **S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.
- **S**weep the nozzle from side-to-side.

Maintenance:

Fire extinguishers typically last 10-12 years. At least once a year, check your extinguisher for:

- *Easy access* - be sure you know where it is and nothing's blocking or limiting your ability to reach it.
- The recommended *pressure level* on its gauge – it should be in the green section.
- *Working parts* and cleanliness – make sure the can, hoses and nozzles are not damaged, dented, rusted or covered in dust, oil or grease.
- Legibility of the *instructions* printed on the side.

Source: FEMA

