

July 2007 Safety Meeting

Fire Extinguisher Safety

Fire safety is the primary function of all propane industry employees. If a fire does break out it is important to be able to respond to such an emergency. This safety meeting reviews some of the basic elements of fire extinguisher operation, limitations and safety.

TYPES OF FIRES AND EXTINGUISHERS

A portable fire extinguisher is a "first aid" device and is very effective when used while the fire is small. The use of fire extinguisher that matches the class of fire, by a person who is well trained, can save both lives and property. The successful performance of a fire extinguisher in a fire situation largely depends on its proper selection, inspection, maintenance, and distribution.

There are four different types of fires:

Type A - ordinary combustibles such as wood, cloth, paper, rubber and many plastics

Type B - flammable liquids, such as gasoline, oil, grease, tar, oil-based paint, lacquer, and flammable gas

Type C - energized electrical equipment, including wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers, machinery and appliances

Type D - combustible metals such as magnesium and potassium (uncommon)

NFPA #58 indicates all propane trucks should be fitted with a fire extinguisher with a minimum 18 B:C rating. Similar extinguishers should be placed in and around the bulk storage facility. Note: an A:B:C rated fire extinguisher is acceptable (and even preferred) to replace a B:C rated unit.

ALL EMPLOYEES SHOULD KNOW

- Where the fire alarm boxes are in your area. They should be well marked and easy to access.
- Where the exit routes are in your area. The lighted exit signs will help guide you in heavy smoke.
- Where all fire extinguishers are located. The extinguishers must be mounted in a designated location, well marked and easy to access.
- The facility specific procedures to follow in the event of a fire. What steps to follow, where to go and how to use a fire extinguisher if needed.

GENERIC PROCEDURES FOR FIRE EMERGENCIES

Each propane facility should have fire evacuation procedures in place, employees should be familiar with them. The below procedure identifies generic actions, each employee is responsible for complying with their respective facility specific procedures.

- Notify the fire department by an appropriate means.
- Evacuate the building/area as soon as the alarm sounds using the closest, safe emergency exit assisting the disabled and visitors on your way out.
- **Do not extinguish a propane-fueled fire unless the gas supply can be shut off simultaneously.**
- Close inner doors if time permits on your way out.
- If you have been trained in the use of a portable fire extinguisher and are able to safely extinguish the fire you may do so. Be sure you have a safe exit available and leave if one extinguisher does not put out the fire.
- Proceed to the designated assembly area.
- If trapped, close your office/room door and call 911. Place clothes or other material under door to limit smoke entry.

REMEMBER THE P-A-S-S WORD

Although extinguishers can vary in size, color and type of extinguishing agent, all devices operate basically the same way. If the fire is small and heavy smoke is NOT present and you have an exit available to you for evacuation purposes, grab the nearest appropriate extinguisher and operate following the P-A-S-S procedure:

P - Pull the pin located in the extinguisher's handle.

A - Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire.

S - Squeeze the handle.

S - Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire until the fire is out.

Class discussion:

Have class members discuss actual fire emergencies they have experienced in the past and how the use of fire extinguishers helped reduce the damage and associated threats. Discuss location of all fire extinguishers and consider having the class member inspect all fire extinguishers for functionality.

Closing

Typically, fire extinguisher use in the propane industry is for early stage fires. Some fires are just too big and out of control to stand and fight. Know your limitations and those of the fire extinguisher. Never extinguish a propane-fueled fire unless you know you can turn off the gas supply. And in some cases, the best plan is to evacuate the area, keep others a safe distance away and call in professional fire fighters. Be safe out there.....

July 2007 Test

Fire Extinguisher Safety

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Read and answer each of the following questions. When complete, grade the test and review incorrect answers so each employee is “armed” with the correct answers before they leave the training.

1. This safety meeting discussed _____ different types of fire extinguishers :
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4

2. Typically, in the propane industry, fire extinguishers should only be used in early stage fires:
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Shutting off the supply of propane is critical when fighting a propane-fueled fire:
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. Fill in what the meaning of the P-A-S-S procedure
 - a. P _____
 - b. A _____
 - c. S _____
 - d. S _____

5. Knowing exit routes and assembly points for employees is not important in our industry.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. If you were fighting a combustible metal fire, what type of fire extinguisher would you use?
Answer: _____

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Answer Sheet

1. d.
2. a.
3. a.
4. Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep
5. b.
6. Type D