



# Fire Extinguisher Rating System

## Toolbox Talk Lesson Plan

Fire extinguishers are classified and rated based on the type and amount of fuel they are designed to extinguish. It is important to understand the system because using the wrong or under-sized extinguisher may result in increased fire damage or injury to the user.

There are **5 Basic Classifications of fires**. They are shown below with a copy of the pictogram that should be displayed on the fire extinguisher label as well as the older A, B, C & D symbols.



**A**

Class A fires are those that involve ordinary combustibles such as paper, wood, or plastics. The new pictograph depicts a burning trash can and wood pieces. The older designation was the letter A in a green triangle. A good memory aid is that Class A fires leave Ashes.

2 ½ gallon pressurized water extinguisher is rated as 2A which means it can put out a wood crib fire about 2' x 2' x 2' or 12 pounds of shredded paper. An extinguisher rated 1A can safely handle a 20" x 20" by 20" wood crib fire.



**B**

Class B fires are those that involve flammable or combustible liquids such as gasoline, kerosene, or diesel fuel. The new pictograph shows a WWII jerry gasoline can and a burning pool of liquid. The older designation was the letter B in a red square. A memory aid for Class B fires is that a flammable liquid must Boil and give off vapors in order to burn.

An extinguisher rated at 20B will put out a 50 sq. ft. spill, or about 1 ½ sheets of plywood. A 40B extinguisher can handle 100 sq. ft. or 3 sheets of plywood.



**C**

Class C fires are those that involve energized electrical equipment. The new pictograph shows an electrical cord and outlet with fire in the background. The older designation is the letter C in a blue circle. The memory aid for this is electricity has a Current.

There is no rating system for Class C fire extinguishers.



Class D fires involve combustible metals such as magnesium. There is no new pictogram so you will only see the older letter D in a yellow star.



Class K fires involve vegetable oils and animal fats used in commercial cooking appliances. The memory aid is Class K fires are in Kitchens.

*This lesson plan is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, please contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046. **Presenters should attach sign-in sheet to this lesson plan.***