

Tool Box Talk – Fire Extinguishers

- Fire extinguishers are required on all job sites and are especially necessary in hot work areas for operations like welding and torch cutting.
- Not all fires and not all fire extinguishers are alike.
- Fire extinguishers are rated for use based on the class of fire they are designed to extinguish.
- The three basic types of fires that welders need to consider are classified as A, B, or C fires.
- Class A Fires – These fires are made up of ordinary combustible materials such as paper, rags, scrap lumber, etc. They require a cooling agent for extinguishment. The fire extinguishers recommended for Class A fires are water and soda-acid.
- Class B Fires – These fires are made up of flammable liquids, oils, and grease. They require smothering for effective extinguishment. The recommended fire extinguishers are carbon dioxide, dry chemical, and foam.
- Class C Fires – These fires are made up of electrical equipment. They require a non-conductive fire extinguishing agent. The recommended fire extinguishers are carbon dioxide and dry chemical.
- Look at the fire extinguishers on your jobsite to determine what class or classes of fires they are designed to extinguish. The class or classes of fires will be clearly marked on each extinguisher.
- The best fire extinguishers for the jobsite are the ones that will effectively extinguish all three of the basic classes of fires.
- If you use a fire extinguisher or see one with a gauge that indicates it isn't fully charged, let your supervisor know immediately.

Extinguishers that have been used and those that are defective should be inspected and recharged or replaced right away.