University of Nevada, Reno

FIRE EXTINGUISHER
Safety PROGRAM

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy

It is the policy of the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) to ensure safe and healthy learning, research, work, entertainment and student living environments for faculty, staff, students and visitors. Implicit in this policy is a requirement to provide all individuals with pertinent information about workplace safety.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Fire Extinguisher Safety Program is to familiarize employees with the general principles of fire extinguisher use and the hazards involved with incipient stage fire fighting.

The Fire Extinguisher Safety Program has been developed to provide University employees with the necessary information to identify potential fire safety concerns. This information will help ensure the safety and health of all employees, students and visitors at the University of Nevada, Reno.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to all University of Nevada, Reno employees who work in or near environments with access to university provided fire extinguishers for employee use during emergencies.
2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Chairs, Directors, Department Heads shall ensure that:

- This policy is disseminated to their subordinates
- That each supervisor and employee adheres to procedures
- Employees complete Fire Extinguisher Safety Training
- Faculty, instructors and managers implement all guidelines within the Fire Extinguisher Safety Program into their curriculum and training for students and employees
- Personnel understand their responsibilities established in the program
- Employee complaints regarding lack of support or unsafe conditions are investigated and corrected when necessary

2.2 Supervisors, Principal Investigators (PIs) shall ensure that:

- Employees under their supervision receive Fire Extinguisher Safety Program training
- There is adequate documentation and tracking of all training within their group
- Employees follow established safety procedures
- There is a copy of this written program in the workplace
- Employees are instructed in the proper procedures for an emergency situation in accordance with the facility emergency plan
- Employees are provided appropriate extinguisher training according to the work environment
- Employees receive extinguisher training at least on an annual basis
- Employees understand the restrictions imposed on untrained employees in reference to extinguisher use

2.3 Employees shall ensure that they:

- Know the hazards and precautionary procedures for their work area
- Comply with procedures and information provided in training and in the Fire Extinguisher Safety Program
- Ask the supervisor for assistance or clarification when necessary
- Attend required training
- Plan and conduct operations in accordance with established procedures and good safety practices
2.4 **Fire & Life Safety** shall support the education program during classroom and hands on (live) fire extinguisher training. The office shall:

- Assist in determining priority of personnel to attend training
- Provide technical knowledge for curriculum development and perform instructor duties in support of classroom and hands on training
- Authorize and oversee hands on extinguisher training after determining all conditions meet minimum safety levels
- Provide burn and extinguishing materials for extinguisher training
- Ensure preparation of facilities and housekeeping after training
- Be available to support at least one scheduled training session per month and as many additional requests as possible

2.5 **Department of Environmental Health and Safety** shall perform the following functions:

- Perform overall program administration
- Develop, implement and evaluate the University’s Fire Extinguisher Safety Program
- Assists in dissemination of the policy
- Recommend appropriate engineering controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment
- Coordinate regular employee and outreach training sessions
- With the assistance of Fire and Life Safety personnel, develop course curriculum and perform classroom instructor duties
- Assists departments in creating and maintaining the records that come under the purview of the policy.
3.0 TYPES OF PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Type of fire extinguishers are identified by the class of fires on which they may be used

**Class A** – Ordinary combustibles (paper, wood, rags, etc.)
**Class B** – Flammable Liquids
**Class C** – Electrical Equipment
**Class D** – Combustible Metals
**Combination Types** – ABC and BC

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**Class A:** Paper, wood, Rags

**Class B:** Flammable Liquid

**Class C:** Electrical Equipment

**Class D:** Combustible Metals
4.0 RACE

When there is a fire in your area, perform the RACE procedures:

1. **Rescue** anyone in immediate danger of the fire.

2. **Activate** the nearest fire alarm pull station and **call 911**. The fire bell will ring on the fire floor and throughout the building. The alarm will also signal UNR Police who will notify the Reno Fire Department. Calling 911 will ensure that UNR Police received the alarm and to verify the fire as reported.

3. **Confine** the fire by closing doors to the fire **(do not lock)**. As people are notified to evacuate, ensure that all doors are closed.

4. **Evacuate** to an area of refuge. When a fire is reported on your floor everyone is required to evacuate the area either through a set of fire doors on your floor or via the stairs downward to the assembly point. Never go up (unless you're below grade) or down to an area below grade. **Do not use elevators!**
5.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FIRE EXTINGUISHER USE

If an attempt is made to extinguish a fire, ensure that you don't put yourself or others in danger. You should know how to deal with the immediate situation and be knowledgeable in the use of fire extinguishers. It is also recommended to have another person with you in case a problem occurs and immediate help is required.

Use the PASS system when fighting fires

Remove extinguisher from mounting

Pull pin – this allows you to activate the extinguisher
Aim – hold hose and point at the base of the fire
Squeeze – the trigger mechanism to release the extinguishing agent
Sweep – back and forth at the base of the fire
6.0 HAZARDS INVOLVED WITH INCEPTION STAGE FIRE FIGHTING

A fire is in the INCIPIENT stage when it has just started and it is easily extinguishable by one extinguisher and requires no special fire fighting gear or equipment.

A fire can quickly go beyond the incipient stage. Ensure others are warned when a fire is discovered.

Beware of either thick or unusually colored smoke as most people die or become injured from smoke inhalation rather than from the fire itself.

Do not try to fight structural fires such as walls, floors and columns with fire extinguishers because extinguishers are not designed for fighting structural fires.

Know where the closest extinguisher is to your work area to save time in the event of a fire emergency.
7.0 Locations of fire extinguishers

Portable fire extinguishers for use by employees shall be placed within a specific area. Below is the list for each class along with the maximum employee travel distance to any extinguisher.

- Class A – 75 feet
- Class B – 50 feet
- Class C – Applicable Class A or B distance
- Class D – 75 feet
8.0 Maintenance & Inspection

- Visual inspection each month
- Maintenance check every year
- Hydrostatically tested whenever they show new evidence of corrosion or mechanical damage and:
  - CO₂ – 5 years
  - Water – 5 years
  - Dry Chemical – 12 years (empty & refill every 6 years)
  - Halon – 12 years
9.0 RULES FOR FIRES

Fires are very dangerous
Regardless of their size

Fire extinguishers are to be used by trained individuals ONLY. At no time should anyone jeopardize their safety or that of others in an attempt to fight a fire.

If in doubt you should:

- Leave the area immediately
- Close the door behind you
- Activate the fire alarm (pull stations are located along exit pathways)
- Notify the fire department immediately by dialing 911
- Assist anyone in danger

1. Never fight a fire if you don't know what is burning

If you don't know what is burning, you don't know what type of extinguisher to use. Even if you have an ABC extinguisher, there may be something in the fire that could to explode or produce highly toxic smoke.

2. Never fight a fire if the fire is spreading rapidly beyond the spot where it started

The time to use an extinguisher is in the incipient, or beginning, stages of a fire. If the fire is already spreading quickly, it is best to simply evacuate the building, closing doors and windows behind you as you leave.

3. Never fight a fire if you don't have adequate or appropriate equipment

If you don't have the correct type or large enough extinguisher, it is best not to try to fight the fire.

4. Never fight a fire if you might inhale toxic smoke

If the fire is producing large amounts of smoke that you would have to breathe in order to fight it, it is best not to try. Gases from manmade materials can be fatal in very small amounts.
5. **Never fight a fire if your instincts tell you not to.**

If you are uncomfortable with the situation for any reason, just let the fire department do their job.

6. **Always position yourself with an exit or means of escape at your back before you attempt to use an extinguisher to put out a fire.**

In case the extinguisher malfunctions, or something unexpected happens, you need to be able to get out quickly, and you want to avoid becoming trapped.

**REMEMBER - Always keep an exit at your back**