

TOOLBOX TALK #19

WHERE TO PLACE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Are your jobsite fire extinguishers in the right place? According to the National Fire Protection Association, employers need to consider two key factors: accessibility and visibility.

Accessible

Extinguishers should be placed where they are readily accessible in the event of a fire, which typically includes normal paths of travel.

Visible

If visible obstruction cannot be avoided, then arrows, lights or signs are needed to help indicate where the fire extinguisher is located.

Meeting these two requirements is only the beginning. OSHA and NFPA have more placement guidelines.

- You should not have to travel more than 100 feet to get to an extinguisher.
- In multi-stored buildings, at least one extinguisher should be placed at every stairwell, on every floor.
- Although ABC fire extinguishers are most common, make sure the extinguisher used will do the job. Using a water-based extinguisher during winter months in our area may not work when you need it.
- Place extinguishers in areas where flammable materials may be used.
- Fire extinguishers should be inspected regularly to make sure:
 - They're in the right location
 - They're clean (not sprayed over by drywall or paint overspray)
 - Their tag faces outward and is legible
 - Their seals are in place
 - They're full or haven't been used recently
- Finally, fire extinguishers need to be inspected annually and documented, preferably by a third party.

