



A Guide to Fire Extinguishers in the Kitchen for Fire prevention Week

An accessible and working fire extinguisher is fundamental to kitchen safety. Having 1) the correct type of fire extinguisher, 2) in an accessible location, 3) that you know how to safely use is key to safely being able to put out a fire in your kitchen.

But why does the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) care?

- Across the U.S. there is average of 170,000 reported cooking fires in homes every year. *
- They cause an estimated 135 deaths and 3,000 injuries a year. *
- Over \$495 million in property loss annually. *
- They are the cause for almost half of all home fires. *
- OSFM regulates fire extinguishers.

*Data from the [U.S. Fire Administration](#).

OSFM is the licensing and certification authority for portable fire extinguishers that are serviced and sold in California. OSFM also ensures that the California Standards are met for these life saving devices. All portable fire extinguishers, like those in your homes or businesses, must meet the manufacturing and performance standards of a testing laboratory approved by the OSFM and display that laboratory's label.



An ABC classification fire extinguisher.

Let's move on to the important kitchen fire extinguisher safety information. First up is making sure you have the right type of fire extinguisher. Extinguishers with the 'ABC' categorization can also be used in domestic kitchens as these are rated for combustibles, liquids, and equipment fires.

In the U.S. fire extinguishers come in five different classes, each with a different application. 'ABC' classified extinguisher is the national recommend extinguisher in home kitchens. If your home cooks with larger amount of oil, you might consider a 'K' class extinguisher. It is designed to extinguish larger kitchen fires involving combustible cooking oils. 'K' is the fire extinguisher classification that is required in commercial kitchens.

When purchasing a fire extinguisher, always make sure that it has a California UL approval seal. Typically, compact fire extinguishers for domestic kitchen use cost \$50 to \$100, while a type K cost \$185 to \$300.

Next, let's move onto location. Extinguishers should be placed where they are easily accessible in the event of a fire and preferably somewhere visible, no more than four feet of the floor. This can be on a hanger in the kitchen, in a kitchen cabinet, or somewhere accessible that is next to the kitchen.

Finally, we come to the correct use of an extinguisher. Let's take, for example, a saucepan oil fire. If the fire cannot be extinguished by putting the lid of the saucepan, then it's time for the tried-and-true Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep (PASS) method. First, pull the pin to break the seal and test the extinguisher. Next, aim at the base of the fire and ensure you have a means of escape. Squeeze the operating handle to discharge the extinguishing agent. Finally, sweep from side to side, aiming at the base of the fire until it is completely extinguished. If the fire cannot be extinguished, then retreat to a safe distance from the fire and call 911.



Learn more about fire extinguisher placement and use on [the National Fire Protection Association website](#).

Learn more about the [OSFM Fire Extinguisher Program](#).