
SUBJECT:	Portable Fire Extinguishers	Number:	OHS-016
CATEGORY:	Fire Extinguisher Program	Origin Date:	01-29-2019
ISSUING OFFICE:	Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) Office	Revision Date:	NEW

Guidelines on Clean Up of Discharged Portable Fire Extinguishers

DESCRIPTION

Portable fire extinguishers, when accessible and fully charged, are an effective and proven means of fighting a fire during its early stages. However, portable fire extinguishers located in District school sites are subjected to costly vandalism, tampering and discharging (accidental or intentional) that threatens their usefulness in time of need. This guideline on the safe response to a discharged fire extinguisher is being provided to prevent the risk of injury.

LEGAL BASIS

This guideline has been established and maintained within the District for all employees to comply with requirements set forth in Section 6151 of the California Code of Regulations, Title 8 and Section 567 of the California Code of Regulations, Title 19.

HAZARD ASSESSMENT

The District uses the following portable fire extinguishers for specific fire classes:

Class ABC Dry Chemical (paper, combustible liquids and electrical fires) fire extinguishers like in Figure 1 contains primarily mono-ammonium phosphate and ammonium sulfate that can cause injury by contact or inhalation. This product is an irritant to the respiratory system, eyes and skin. Symptoms may include coughing, shortness of breath, and irritation of the lungs, eyes, and skin. A copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is attached for reference (see Attachment A – ABC Dry Chemical Extinguisher Agent SDS).



Figure 1

Class K Wet Chemical (kitchen grease and oil fires) fire extinguishers like in Figure 2 contains potassium acetate and potassium citrate, that can cause injury by contact or inhalation. This product is an irritant to the respiratory system, eyes and skin. Symptoms may include coughing, sore throat, difficulty breathing, eye pain, and skin redness and irritation. A copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is attached for reference (see Attachment B – K Wet Chemical Extinguisher Agent SDS).



Figure 2

RESPONSE

- Room/building occupants must leave the immediate area, closing doors and windows if possible on the way out, and notify the school site's main office.
- If discharge was significantly distributed and airborne, entire building must be evacuated and contact the San Diego Fire Department for incident direction and the EHS Office for emergency clean-up of large spills (two or more fire extinguishers).
- If discharge is limited in extent, to a single fire extinguisher, and not significantly airborne, secure the immediate area to prevent further spread until professional cleaning by custodial personnel has been completed. The Building Services Supervisor/Plant Operations Supervisor of the school site shall be contacted to initiate clean up.



- School nurse shall assess for injuries to persons who may have been impacted by the discharge, particularly to the eyes, skin or respiratory system. Refer to Section 4 of SDS for First Aid Measures.
- Damages should be reported to the Risk Management Department.

CLEAN UP

- Custodial personnel who will clean up minor spill must be trained and equipped to handle clean up of discharged fire extinguisher agents. Refer to Section 6 of SDS for Accidental Release Measures.
- Avoid dust formation. Clean up discharged agents using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuum or sorbent materials and shovel to minimize generation of dust.
- Clean all equipment. Collect all dry chemical residue into a plastic bag. Waste generated from this product would not likely be considered as hazardous.
- Ventilate and wash spill area only after pickup is complete. Do not drain/dump rinsates into storm sewer, inlets, surface water conveyances or floor drains that lead to creeks and waterways.

PRECAUTIONS

- No one shall enter areas where fire extinguishers have been discharged. If necessary, the appropriate PPE must be worn. Limit tracking fire extinguishing agents to locations outside of the discharged area. If the area must be traversed in an emergency without PPE, best efforts should be made not to inhale or disturb the agents.

ATTACHMENTS

- A- ABC Dry Chemical Extinguisher Agent SDS
- B- K Wet Chemical Extinguisher Agent SDS

If you have questions or comments about these guidelines, please contact

Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) Office

(858) 627-7174

San Diego Unified School District reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this guideline and or its content. This document supersedes all previous guidelines relative to this subject.