

FIGHTING FIRES



Fires can be very dangerous and you should always be certain that you will not endanger yourself or others when attempting to put out a fire. For this reason, when a fire is discovered:

- Assist any person in immediate danger to safety, if it can be accomplished without risk to yourself.
- **FOLLOW YOUR CLIENT TRAINING INSTRUCTIONS** which may mean you notify a company official - or - you may be instructed to notify the fire department by dialing 911 yourself first.
- Only after having done these two things, if the fire is small, you may attempt to use an extinguisher to put it out.

However, before deciding to fight the fire, keep these rules in mind:

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 is going to explode or produce highly toxic smoke. Chances are, you *will* know what's burning, or at least have a pretty good idea, but if you don't, let the fire department handle it.

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.



Do Not Fight the 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.
- **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. Any sort of combustion will produce some amount of carbon monoxide, but when synthetic materials such as the nylon in carpeting or foam padding in a sofa burn, they can produce highly toxic gases such as hydrogen cyanide, acrolein, and ammonia in addition to carbon monoxide. These gases can be fatal in very small amounts.
- **Your instincts tell you not to.** If you are uncomfortable with the situation for any reason, just let the fire department do their job.
- **The final rule is to 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 don't want to become trapped. Just remember, **always keep an exit at your back.**