



How to Dispose of Old Fire Extinguishers

FIRST: Determine what type of fire extinguisher you have. Ratings are shown on the extinguisher faceplate.

- Class A and B extinguishers carry a numerical rating that indicates how large a fire an experienced person can safely put out with that extinguisher.
- Class C extinguishers have only a letter rating to indicate that the extinguishing agent will not conduct electrical current. Class C extinguishers must also carry a Class A or B rating.
- Class D extinguishers carry only a letter rating indicating their effectiveness on certain amounts of specific metals.
- Some extinguishers are marked with multiple ratings such as AB, BC and ABC. These extinguishers are capable of putting out more than one class of fire.
- Multipurpose (ABC-rated) chemical extinguishers leave a residue that can harm sensitive equipment, such as computers and other electronic equipment. Because of this, carbon dioxide or halon extinguishers are preferred in these instances because they leave very little residue.

SECOND: Has it ever been used?

- **YOU CANNOT "TEST" A FIRE EXTINGUISHER.** DRY CHEMICAL extinguishers will usually NOT hold a charge after partial use. This is also true for all your personal home and vehicle dry chemical extinguishers. While the gauge may hold steady in the green immediately after a slight use, check it the next day and you'll find the gauge on EMPTY! This is because upon use the dry powder gets inside the seals and allows the nitrogen carrier to escape over a period of time. After ANY use a BC or ABC extinguisher MUST be serviced and recharged. This is very important for home extinguishers also; **YOU SHOULD HAVE THE EXTINGUISHER REFILLED AFTER ANY USE.**
- CO2 and halon extinguishers will generally hold their pressure after a slight discharge, HOWEVER, it is best to always have a full canister in case of an emergency.

THIRD: Some fire extinguishers are rechargeable as long as it is up to the current standards.

- Contact a Fire Safety Equipment dealer to determine if your fire extinguisher is rechargeable.

FOURTH: Consider taking your fire extinguisher to a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection program if one is offered where you live and the program accepts fire extinguishers. If your community does not have a HHW collection program or the HHW program does not accept fire extinguishers, you may put it in the trash provided:

- You release any pressure contained in the canister by shooting a small amount into an open area.
- You let the canister sit for a few days, making sure the pressure has been released.
- Once you are confident there is no longer any pressure, dispose in a trash bag in your regular garbage.