

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

A datasheet on CO₂ FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Tackling a fire involving electrical equipment is likely to be one of the more common uses of the CO₂ extinguisher. In most cases where you find two extinguishers together, one of those will be CO₂. CO₂ provides a safe, non-conductive means of fighting the fire risks presented by the 'Electrical' hazards of the modern workplace. It extinguishes fire by removing the oxygen and replacing it with a non-flammable gas.

OPERATION & APPLICATION

1. Aim nozzle at the fire and then let go of it.
2. Remove safety clip or pin.
3. Press handles together.
4. Apply the CO₂ to the fire as follows;

If you find yourself confronted with a fire on electrical equipment, before attempting to fight the fire, whenever possible, switch off and unplug the appliance. The CO₂ should be then be applied through any available opening. The reason for switching off and unplugging first is that electricity provides the ignition source to start the fire, so once it has been removed, the fire may die out of its own accord.

Flammable liquids; The technique for fighting this type of fire is; aim the nozzle at the near edge of the fire, then let go of it, remove the safety clip or pin, squeeze the handles together and apply the contents of the extinguisher to the fire, driving the fire from the near edge away from you.



CO₂ Fire Extinguisher

Remember, CO₂ is stored under extremely high pressure, so when you operate the extinguisher do not stand too close as you may cause the burning liquid to splash and spread the fire.

A point to remember with CO₂ is that although the gas and parts of the extinguisher become extremely cold, it doesn't have a significant cooling effect on the fire so the fire is liable to re-ignite.

As CO₂ is a gas it is not really suited for use on fires outside, as the cloud of CO₂ is liable to disperse before the fire has been extinguished.

CAUTION

Before operating this extinguisher it is very important to remember to let go of the discharge horn. This is because while it is being operated this part of the extinguisher gets **VERY** cold. It can get sufficiently cold for your hand to stick, which may cause very painful frost burns.

CLASSES

The carbon dioxide (CO₂) extinguisher is suitable for CLASS B fires, which are those fires involving flammable liquids. It is also suitable for fires which involve 'live' electrical equipment.

HEALTH & SAFETY

CO₂ extinguishes a fire by removing the oxygen, and therefore should not be used in a confined space.

SIZES

CO₂ is available in two sizes, the range of both sizes is around 2 metres. The most common size contains 2 kg of CO₂ and weighs around 5 kilograms.

DURATION

2 kg CO₂ approx 10 seconds.
5 kg CO₂ approx 15 seconds.

BS 5423 - CO₂

Before January 1997, the contents of the fire extinguishers were generally identified by their colour. The CO₂ extinguisher was painted **BLACK** and the instruction label stated which types of fire that the extinguisher could and could not be used on.

Although, this colour coding was superseded in January 1997 by BS EN3, the old colour coded extinguishers can still be used until they have been condemned as unserviceable or they reach the end of their normal life. At this time it will be replaced with a BS EN3 extinguisher.