Fire Extinguishers in the Workplace

One of the jobs of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) is to ensure that all fire extinguishers on campus are inspected on a monthly and a yearly basis to ensure they are in good working order. EHS follows all requirements in NFPA 10 Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers, which states that fire extinguishers "shall be....readily accessible and immediately available in the event of fire" and also that "fire extinguishers shall not be obstructed or obscured from view".

There are some things you can do in your work space to make sure your extinguishers are accessible and ready in the event of a fire.

First, make sure to note where the fire extinguishers are located in your work area. The fire extinguishers are typically located near entrances to rooms and in hallways. Do not remove the fire extinguishers from their brackets, or move the extinguishers to another location. If you want the extinguisher moved to another location, please discuss with EHS.

Secondly, make sure the extinguisher is not blocked 36” around the extinguisher. Make sure there are no boxes, carts, chairs or anything blocking or covering up the extinguisher and that it is easily accessible.

Do not deface any markings or labels on the extinguisher or tamper with the seals. If you notice that an extinguisher has been damaged in any way, please contact EHS as soon as possible. If you must discharge an extinguisher for any reason, please contact EHS to replace your extinguisher.

Remember, don’t use an extinguisher unless you feel very comfortable doing so.

Never fight a fire:
- If the fire is spreading beyond the spot where it started
- If you can’t fight the fire with your back to an escape exit
- If the fire can block your only escape
- If you don’t have adequate fire-fighting equipment

EHS needs your help to ensure the fire extinguishers are not blocked or obstructed. Make sure you know the location of the fire extinguishers in your work area. If you used an extinguisher to fight a fire, make sure you contact EHS as soon as possible so we can replace your extinguisher. Do not set the extinguisher back on the hanger; place it in the floor directly beneath the hanger, so that others will not pickup and use this extinguisher.

If you are interested in learning how to use a fire extinguisher and other fire safety training, please contact EHS at 974-5084. In addition, if you have any questions on fire safety, please contact EHS or visit our web-site at http://web.utk.edu/~ehss/