

Safer places of Worship

Fire Extinguishers

Fire fighting equipment should be provided in all areas. All fire fighting equipment should be maintained annually by a competent person.

At least one 9-litre water extinguisher should be provided per floor. As a general guide, one 9-litre water extinguisher, or the equivalent, should be provided for every 200 square metres of floor area. The distance a person has to travel to reach an extinguisher or hose reel should not exceed 30 metres. Hose reels should reach to within six metres of the extent of the floor area they are intended to cover.

Specialist extinguishers should be located in areas deemed to offer significant or unusual risks.



Types of Fire Extinguishers:

Water Extinguishers

Colour - red

Extinguishing action – by cooling burning material.

Suitable for – carbonaceous fires, those involving solid materials, usually of an organic nature, in which combustion takes place with the formation of glowing embers.

DANGER: Do not use on live electrical equipment or burning oil or fat.

Foam Extinguishers

Colour - cream or red with cream panel

Extinguishing action – forms a blanket of foam over the surface of the burning liquid and smothers the fire

Suitable for – fires involving liquids or liquefiable solids, such as fats

DANGER: Do not use on live electrical equipment

Dry Powder Extinguishers

Colour – blue or red with a blue panel.

Extinguishing action – chemical inhibition of combustion.

Suitable for - any type of fire but may leave a residue which could involve heavy cleaning costs.

DANGER: These units are not suitable for use on fires involving organs and not recommended for kitchens. Dry Powder has a limited cooling effect and care should be taken to ensure the fire does not re-ignite.

Carbon Dioxide

Colour – black or red with a black panel.

Extinguishing action – displacement of oxygen in the air.

Suitable for – fires involving oils and fats – safe on electrical equipment.

DANGER: CO₂ has a limited cooling effect and care should be taken to ensure that the fire does not re-ignite.

DANGER: Fumes from CO₂ extinguishers can be harmful to users in confined spaces. The area should be ventilated as soon as the fire has been extinguished. To avoid coldburns the extinguisher should only be held by the handle and not the horn.

Fire Blanket

Suitable for small fires involving burning liquid e.g. deep fat fryers.

WARNING: Do not remove the blanket from a fryer until it has cooled. Switch off heat source. Do NOT remove fryer until it is cool.

The location of all extinguishers must be clearly indicated by suitable signs particularly where their location is not immediately obvious.

Most fires on church premises can be extinguished with water, using an extinguisher or hose reel. The exceptions are fires involving oils and fats e.g. deep fat fryers on which foam or AFFF (Aqueous Film Forming Foam) solution extinguishers should be used.

Fires involving live electrical equipment should be dealt with using carbon dioxide extinguishers preferably after the power has been isolated to prevent re-ignition.

A fire blanket can be used to cover a fire involving a pan of fat. It can also be used to wrap around a person whose clothing is on fire.

Fire extinguishers should normally be located in conspicuous positions on escape routes, preferably near entry/exit doors, bearing in mind the risk of pilfering. Where practicable they should be securely hung on wall brackets. Where this is not possible, extinguishers should be placed on a suitable base plate (not on the floor). To assist in lifting and carrying, the handles of larger, heavier extinguishers should be about a metre from the floor, but smaller lighter extinguishers may be mounted at a higher level.

In the event of a fire, only those persons trained in their correct operation should use extinguishers. No attempt should be made to tackle a fire if this places the person in any danger.