

Fire Extinguishers

Scenario Answer Key

Generally, when there is a fire in the workplace, employees will sound the fire alarm and evacuate the area. However, employees may attempt to put out the fire if it is small enough and if they have been trained on how to properly use a fire extinguisher.

It happened like this

Travis is an employee who just didn't seem to want to follow directions. Shortly after his shift started, the fire alarm sounded in his work area, where there just happened to be flammable liquids stored.

Travis decided to go over and take a look at the fire. On the way over, he noticed several of his coworkers heading in the opposite direction. They yelled for him to follow them.

When Travis got to the fire he noticed that the flames were four or five feet high. He grabbed the nearest fire extinguisher, even though he'd never had training on how to use it. Pulling the pin, he aimed the nozzle at the top of the fire, closed his eyes, and started spraying.

Ten seconds later the fire extinguisher was empty, the fire spread, and Travis worried that he may not be able to get out.

What are the issues?

- Fire near flammable liquids.
- Violation of company safety policies.

What went right?

- The fire alarm sounded.
- Employees evacuated the building.

What did Travis do wrong?

- Did not evacuate the building.
- Attempted to extinguish the fire.
- Did not use the fire extinguisher correctly.



What do you think should happen next?

- Determine the cause of the fire.
- Travis should be disciplined.
- Travis should be trained on the four classes of fires, personal hazards in fighting fires, PASS method, emergency procedures, and prevention measures.

Training tips

- Review workplace alarm and evacuation plans and policies, and discuss with the employees.
- Explain what employees are expected to do if they discover a fire.
- Review evacuation routes and head count locations.
- Discuss the company policy on fighting incipient stage fires and employees' use of fire extinguishers.
- Fire extinguisher basics:
 - Employees should only use fire extinguishers if they have received proper training.
 - If a fire extinguisher is used, have employees verify that the class of fire extinguisher is the proper type to use on the fire.
 - Make sure the fire is small enough to contain with an 8-10 second discharge time.
- Use the PASS method to fight the fire: P — Pull the pin, stand back eight to ten feet; A — Aim at the base of the fire; S — Squeeze the release mechanism; S — Sweep at the base of the fire with the extinguishing agent.
- Questions you could ask:
 - Did Travis do the right thing by staying and fighting the fire?
 - What should Travis have done?
 - Should Travis have tried to use the fire extinguisher?
 - What mistakes did Travis make when using the fire extinguisher?
 - What should Travis' coworkers have done?

