



# President's Column Central Hill Country Board of REALTORS®



by Sarah Wanek, 2024 President



## Fire Safety 101: 4 Things to Know About Fire Extinguishers Learn the basics about where to put them and how often to replace them.

Fires are burning faster than in years past due to modern home furnishings, open floor plans, and unprotected light-weight wood, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Homeowners only have two minutes (or less) from when a smoke alarm rings to react. For small fires, a fire extinguisher could save your home from destruction.

Many fire extinguishers are tucked away and even left in their original packaging. That could be a problem if they were needed in an emergency. While many households know the importance of having a fire extinguisher, they may be fuzzy on upkeep. Here's some guidance on fire extinguishers:

### How Often Should You Replace a Fire Extinguisher?

The general guideline is every 10 years. But always check the manufacturer's recommendation, which should be displayed on the fire extinguisher.

### How Do You Know If Your Older Fire Extinguisher Still Works?

Most fire extinguishers have a pressure gauge that shows the current pressure. That will indicate if it has been used or damaged. Check to see if the pressure gauge is still within the device's indicated proper pound per square inch (PSI) range. Also, make sure the extinguishers' can, hoses, and nozzles aren't damaged, dented, or rusted. If they are, it's time to replace the extinguisher.

### Where Should You Put Fire Extinguishers in Your Home?

In general, a portable fire extinguisher should be placed so that a person wouldn't ever have to travel more than 40 feet to reach it. You should never have to travel up or down stairs to access an extinguisher either. Keep at least one on each floor of the home. Make sure nothing is blocking or limiting your ability to reach it quickly. So, avoid storing it under sinks, where it may be more prone to getting blocked by other items.

### What Type of Fire Extinguisher Should You Have in Your Home?

There are actually many types of fire extinguishers. Here's a primer on what the markings mean from the U.S. Fire Administration:

- A:** For use on ordinary materials like cloth, wood, and paper
- B:** For combustible and flammable liquids, such as grease, gas, oil, and oil-based paints
- C:** For electrical equipment, like appliances, tools, or other equipment that is plugged in
- D:** For flammable metals (geared to use in factories)
- K:** For vegetable oils, animal oils, and fats in cooking appliances (geared to use in restaurants)

Most home improvement stores carry multipurpose fire extinguishers that cover Class A through Class C. If you want to get more technical, look for a portable fire extinguisher with a rating of at least 2A:10B. That means it has a firefighting capacity equivalent to 2.5 gallons of water and 10 square feet for a BC type of fire. Prepare now. Fire extinguishers can do their job only if they're in good working condition and placed where you can quickly reach them.

*~courtesy Texas REALTORS®~*

**Central Hill Country Board of REALTORS® is the voice for real estate in the Hill Country covering Gillespie, Blanco, Mason, and Kimble Counties. Visit our website at [www.chcbr.org](http://www.chcbr.org)!**