

Safety Bulletin

Knowing Proper Fire Safety Can Save Your Life

Take one look at YouTube, and you'll find countless videos of raging truck fires. The threat of fire is a professional driver's worst nightmare, and the danger is always present. Knowing the basics of fire safety can save your life. Here's a quick refresher:

Types of Fire Extinguishers

All trucks are required to carry one. But don't just throw it in your cab. An extinguisher must be mounted securely so it doesn't roll or slide around while you drive.

If you think all fire extinguishers are equal, you're mistaken.

Some basics:

- **Class A extinguishers** work on fires involving wood, paper, plastics and textiles.
- **Class B extinguishers** work on burning liquids (gas, oil).
- **Class C extinguishers** work on fires involving electrical equipment.
- **Class D extinguishers** work on combustible metals (magnesium, titanium).

If you carry hazardous materials, your truck must carry an extinguisher with an Underwriters' Laboratories (UL) rating of 10 B:C or more. If you don't carry Hazmat, you must have one extinguisher with a UL rating of 5 B:C or more, or two extinguishers that have a UL rating of 4 B:C or more. The number stands for how many square feet your extinguisher will cover while in use. Make sure your extinguisher is charged and inspected regularly.

How to Use an Extinguisher

In the event of a fire, park in an open area away from traffic and pedestrians if at all possible. Then grab the extinguisher. Stand upwind while maintaining a safe distance from the fire. Then, follow PASS.

That stands for:

- **Pull** the pin.
- **Aim** for the base of the fire. (Do not aim for the top of the flames.)
- **Squeeze** the trigger.
- **Sweep** from side-to-side, and repeat as necessary.

When Is a Fire out?

It may take longer than you think. Even if you don't see any visible flames or smoke, a fire could still restart. Your best bet is to keep spraying until the contents of your extinguisher are empty.

What Can Cause a Fire on My Truck?

If you think engines are the only areas that can catch fire, you may be surprised. Other causes can include rubbing tires (or bodywork rubbing against the tire), overheating tires, overloaded or short circuits, improper fueling or leaking fuel, a smoking driver or flammable cargo. Conducting a full pre-trip inspection can help you avoid any potential fire hazards before you begin your route.

