



How To Handle Small LP-Gas Fires With Portable Fire Extinguisher

In the event of a fire involving LP-gas, it is important to react quickly. The purpose of this bulletin is to discuss the use of portable fire extinguishers in the extinguishment of small LP-gas fires.

SHOULD FIRE BE EXTINGUISHED

In any LP-gas fire, flames should not be extinguished, unless by doing so, the fuel supply can be turned off. If the fire is extinguished and the supply of fuel is not turned off, an explosion hazard much greater than the fire hazard may be created. Accordingly, fire personnel should be trained not to extinguish a flammable gas fire until a definite plan of control extinguishment and fuel shut-off has been established and each person has been instructed on his part of the operation. During this period, water spray from either hand hose lines or fixed piping can be directed upon the equipment to prevent over-heating. See "How To Control LP-gas Leaks and Fires"-NPGA Safety Handbook.

ATTACK FIRE FROM UP-WIND

Fires created by ignition of escaping LP-gas must be contained from up-wind. The dry chemical stream is directed into the flowing gas at the point of escape, utilizing the velocity of the gas to carry the extinguishing agent out to the actual point of combustion. Attacking this type of fire at right angles will result in a complete waste of the extinguishing agent. Hold the dry chemical stream on the escaping fuel behind the point of combustion. Do not follow the ball of fire. After extinguishment, remain close by with extinguisher ready as "stand by" protection against re-ignition, while attempting to stop the flow of fuel. Remember that a 20-30 lb. dry chemical extinguisher will be exhausted in 15-20 seconds.

RECHARGE EXTINGUISHER IMMEDIATELY

Every extinguisher should be re-charged immediately after use. A partially filled extinguisher is very little better than an empty extinguisher. Do not return it to its normal location; instead, invert the extinguisher and squeeze the nozzle to relieve all pressure from the dry chemical container. After all the pressure is relieved, have the extinguisher recharged at a recharge station.

INSPECTIONS - REGULATIONS

All extinguishers must be visually inspected every thirty days and a durable record maintained. At least once a year, complete maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions must be performed and recorded. At 12-year intervals, a hydrostatic test on the extinguisher is required. See OSHA Regulations - General Industry and Safety Regulators -1910.57, Portable Fire Extinguishers for details.

This bulletin provides only a brief treatment of the operation and application of dry-chemical portable fire extinguishers. Consult your fire extinguisher manufacturer for additional information.

The purpose of this bulletin is to set forth general safety practices for the installation, operation, and maintenance of LP-gas equipment. It is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject, and should not be interpreted as precluding other procedures which would enhance safe LP-gas operations. Issuance of this bulletin is not intended to nor should it be construed as an undertaking to perform services on behalf of any party either for their protection or for the protection of third parties. The National Propane Gas Association assumes no liability for reliance on the contents of this bulletin.

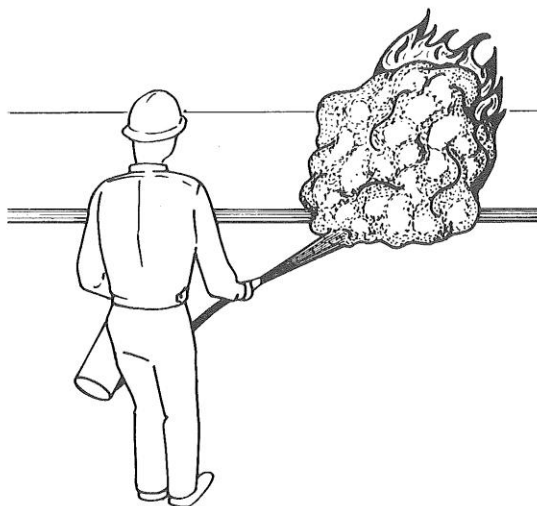


There is a right and a wrong way to handle small LP-Gas fires.

NOTE: Never extinguish an LP-gas fire, unless by doing so, the fuel supply can be shut off immediately.

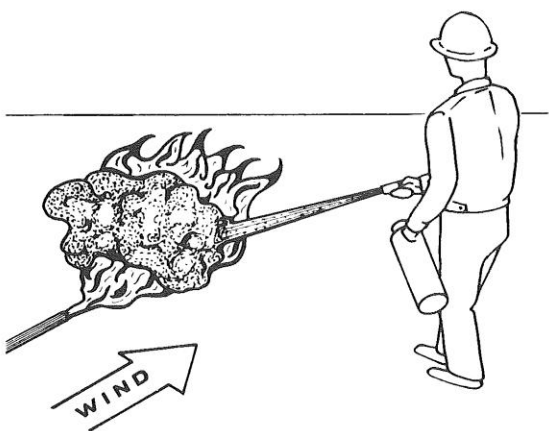


WRONG WAY-This firefighter faces the possibility of facial burns from radiant heat by approaching from down-wind and by failing to take advantage of the heat shielding effect of the fire-killing dry chemical.

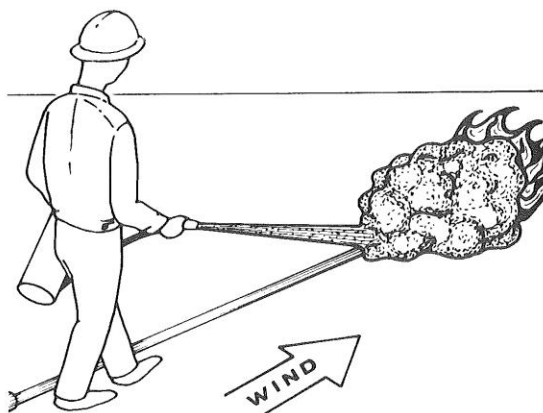


RIGHT WAY-Proper application of the dry chemical proves so effective in fighting a small propane fire that the firefighter is able to effectively extinguish the fire without feeling the heat.

Always approach the fire from upwind.



WRONG WAY-When dry chemical is shot into the center of fire, the fire continues to burn.



RIGHT WAY-Immediate extinguishment is achieved when dry chemical stream is directed at source of fuel through to the base of the fire.