Safety Precautions before Using a Fire Extinguisher

If you see fire or smoke ALWAYS pull the building fire alarm first to ensure people are exiting the building, and someone has called 911.

Evaluate the area and make sure the fire is small and contained. Do not attempt to use a fire extinguisher if the fire is large or spreading, or if you do not know what is burning.

Make sure you have an unobstructed escape route. Stay low and try not to breathe in heated smoke or fumes.

Check the extinguisher for good condition. Do not try to use a fire extinguisher if the handle pin has been tampered with, the cylinder is damaged, or if the pressure gauge pointer is in the red 'RECHARGE' zone.

Make sure you have the proper size and type of extinguisher for the fire at hand and that you are familiar with how to use it. If you do not know what is burning leave fire fighting for emergency responders.

Proceed with the 'PASS' method only if you are confident with your abilities. Start from a safe distance of about 8 feet away and move towards the fire only if it appears the extinguisher agent is working to control the flames. If the fire cannot be controlled, evacuate immediately to safety.