



SENTRY SOLUTIONS

Preventing fires

A fire at your business is one of the most difficult challenges you could face. That's why taking steps to recognize the hazards—and working to correct them—is so important. We've identified some areas of concern and actions you can take to protect your employees and your business.

When a fire happens, it's easy to identify the direct costs. They include:

- Medical costs for employee injuries
- Indemnity payment for lost wages and any resulting disabilities
- Damage to your inventory or building
- Interruption of service

But there are also uninsured, indirect costs:

- Time lost from claim reporting and interviews
- Property valuation and research
- Ongoing productivity and cash flow loss
- Loss of quality employees during the recovery
- Replacement employee recruiting and training
- Regulatory citations and action
- Damage to reputation and image
- Customer dissatisfaction due to damaged property and service interruption
- Technology and learning upgrades with new inventory
- Policy deductibles and increased annual premium

These damages could cost you at least twice the value of your insured loss—sometimes as high as 10 times that. While these uninsured losses could impact the profitability and long-term viability of your business, they also represent a real loss that has to be paid for from your profits.

With that in mind, let's look at ways you could prevent a fire from starting.

DEALERSHIP

Review electrical system

- Have a qualified electrical contractor inspect and test all systems in each building every three to four years.
- Allow system modifications to be performed only by a professionally trained electrician, to prevent makeshift alternations.
- Remove damaged extension cords and replace cords used for more than two weeks with permanent wiring.

Control smoking

- Create smoking and nonsmoking areas or lounges.
- Don't allow smoking in the service or shop departments.
- Designate a specific smoking location and receptacle away from flammable vapors and dust.

Check sprinklers

Examine the system with an annual two-inch drain and quarterly inspector's tests. Hire your local fire marshal's staff or a commercial fire/sprinkler specialist to perform these tests.

Inspect fire extinguishers

- Assess the fire extinguishers at your dealership monthly, and pressure-test them every year.
- Determine whether employees should attempt to extinguish a fire. If so, provide the appropriate training with help from your local fire department.



SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Control all flammables

Specify, require, and enforce the proper management of flammables like gas, diesel fuel, solvents/degreasers, spray lubricants, and coatings throughout your shop.

Use proper containers

Use only Underwriter's Laboratory (UL)-listed metal containers for gasoline or any other dispensed flammable stored in service bays.

Store flammables properly

Store gasoline and flammable solvents in a UL-listed cabinet or properly designed flammables room.

- Store them once the repair is complete and after shop hours.
- Keep any bulk quantity drums in a UL-listed cabinet.

Ground all tanks

If your technicians dispense flammables from a bulk source, drum, or an above- or in-ground tank, make sure to properly ground and bond them. Be sure to reattach the connections when changing out empty drums.

Upgrade equipment

Try a commercial UL-listed caddy to give you more flexibility and safety when siphoning and dispensing gasoline.

Improve oil tanks

When you build fresh and recovery oil storage tanks, make sure they have double-walls and dikes that can hold the entire amount of the largest tank compartment. Add physical barricades and posts around them to prevent damage or rupture.

Inspect parts washers

- Parts washers must be free-closing to ensure a tight lid seal. If the lid is closed, tools or rags must not hang over the tub. Check to make sure the fusible link on the lid hasn't been replaced with a non-fusible component, which prevents the lid from closing in the event of a fire.
- When determining the solvent or medium to use in your parts washer, consider a non-flammable or water-based option with a higher flash point. These are easier to dispose of and pose less of a health risk to employees. Be sure to use the recommended personal protection equipment to prevent skin rash.

Look out for hot spots

If your repairs require the presence of gasoline or other flammable material, check to make sure the exhaust, oil pan, engine, and other parts aren't hot ignition hazards for flammable vapors.

Take care of dirty rags

Make sure there are enough closed-lid, non-combustible receptacles throughout the shop for rags and wipes covered in oil or grease.

BODY REPAIR

Inspect paint booth

Check and change your spray booth filters according to the manufacturer's specifications to maximize draft and ventilation efficiency and prevent the accumulation of flammable paint, finish coat vapors, and residue.

Install safe switches

Use rated, non-sparking switches, lighting, and fixtures inside the spray booth or curtain enclosure to avoid spark and ignition sources.

Protect the sprinkler

If your spray booth is used for spraying flammable finishes more than two hours a day, cover the sprinkler. Alternately, make a suitable retrofit to the sprinkler system or install a self-contained extinguishing system.

These are just some of the ways you can help protect your workers and your business from the losses a fire can cause.

Remember, we're here to help you manage your specific loss-producing situations. Talk with a Safety Services representative or a sales professional for more information, or log in to your account on sentry.com.

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