



Housekeeping and Fire Prevention

Arson and vandalism are serious criminal offenses that can cause major damage to municipal properties and interruptions to day-to-day operations. Arson is now recognized in the United States as the second highest cause of death by fire. For these reasons, it is important to take preventative measures to reduce the potential for this type of crime.

- **Do not store unnecessary items, since large amounts of cluttered fuel containers and packing materials can help fires spread.** Make sure that any stored equipment is well-organized and easily accessible to employees for inspection and rearrangement. If there is not enough floor space, use vertical racks to provide adequate storage volume.
- **Make sure that the height of any stacked materials does not come within 18 inches of fire sprinklers, so that the scope of the sprinkler is not restricted.** Flammables and combustibles should always be stored away from ignition sources like stoves and heaters.
- **Any material affixed to the wall should cover less than 20% of the area of the wall.** Do not post paper to doors or windows, or hang it from ceiling fixtures, since doing so will increase the rate at which fire spreads to the walls and ceilings.
- **Emergency exits, extinguishers, and pull alarms must always be easily accessible.** There should be at least 3 feet of open space in front of extinguishers, pull alarms, and any electrical panels. Monthly visual inspections of extinguishers will help to ensure that they are unexpired and in working condition.
- **Flammable substances should never be stored near the exits.** File cabinets and large book cases that are unfastened should not be positioned near exits since they can fall down and hinder evacuation.
- **Keep stored chemicals in their original containers and ensure lids are closed tightly to minimize the amount of evaporation.** Any transfer of chemicals from their original containers to smaller ones should be temporary, and the amount left over should be disposed of properly or returned to the original.
- **Common flammables and combustibles like paper and wood should never be stored adjacent to buildings or within 35 feet of occupied work areas.**
- **Consistent housekeeping may significantly lower the chance of fires in the workplace.** All employees should be trained to include housekeeping in their daily work routine.

This Alliant Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice. For more information on this topic, please contact Alliant Risk Control Consulting at (949) 260-5042 or riskcontrol@alliant.com.