



San Rafael

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Fire Safety

Oily Rags-Spontaneous Combustion

Another of a series of fires related to “spontaneous combustion” has prompted the San Rafael Fire Department to reach out to residents. San Rafael has experienced at least six fires in the last 18 months that were caused by improper disposal of rags materials used to stain or paint. The property lost to fire could have easily been prevented.

Spontaneous combustion occurs when an object is heated to its ignition temperature chemically and ignites. This can and does occur when materials used with oil based paint and stains, vegetable oil or paint scrapings are piled or wadded up.

To prevent these fires FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW:



1. Always assume that all paints, stains and oils used will spontaneously combust, even though the container may not give a WARNING.
2. Follow manufacturer disposal guidelines.
3. Place all materials into a metal container with a tight top, *or*
4. Lay materials out flat on the ground to dry away from structures. Reuse them or dispose of them once dry, *or*
5. Place into bucket of water to soak then lay out on the ground or separated on clothes line to dry, then reuse them or dispose of them in garbage.

Note: Businesses with larger quantities of materials to dispose of may need to dispose of the materials as hazardous waste. Check with Marin County CUPA 415-499-6647 to verify requirements.

For further assistance please contact the San Rafael Fire Prevention Bureau 415-485-3308.

Fire Prevention Bureau: 1039 C Street, San Rafael, CA 94901
415-485-3308 – FAX 415-453-1627