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Safe Handling of Oil and Solvent Soaked Rags and Wiping Cloths

Wiping rags, waste, clothing or other absorbent materials soaked with oil, solvent, thinners, linseed oil or paint require special handling precautions to reduce fire hazards.

The use of oily waste cans is a safe method of storing these soaked rags and cloths.

Spontaneous Combustion

When materials are soaked with organic substances such as oils, spontaneous heating through oxidation can occur. When this happens, the temperature will continue to increase until spontaneous combustion occurs and the materials burst into flames.

Controlling Spontaneous Combustion

Storing oil soaked rags in specially designed metal cans that safely contain a self-ignited fire controls the danger of spontaneous combustion. These containers are made of metal and have self-closing covers. They need to be elevated so that the heat from a fire within the container won't ignite a wooden floor or other combustibles under the container.

The risk of spontaneous combustion is virtually eliminated by limiting the oxygen in the container. The oxidation process will use up the oxygen in the container stopping the reaction, thus preventing a fire.

Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is essential to prevent fires. Oil soaked combustible materials are subject to being ignited by other sources of ignition such as welding sparks, cutting torch slag, grinding or discarded smoking materials. Oily waste cans placed at key locations will minimize the fire hazard of soaked rags. These should be emptied daily.

Safety Cans

Oily waste containers should bear the label of a recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories or Factory Mutual. The label will ensure the product has been tested and certified to meet the high standards of safety and quality.

Partners In Prevention

At Federated Insurance, we believe Loss Prevention is a critical component of your Risk Management Program. Your Risk Services Coordinator and our Loss Prevention Team are available to assist you in reviewing your specific business needs and providing recommendations for loss prevention programs that will benefit you. Working together to reduce your loss exposures, ultimately impacts your bottom line!

For more information, contact your Risk Services Coordinator, our Loss Prevention Department at 1-800-665-1934, or visit our website at www.federated.ca



Knowing your business matters.

Federated Insurance provides this Loss Prevention Bulletin as a service to our policyholders and their business advisors. The information provided is intended to be general in nature, and may not apply in your province. The advice of independent legal or other business advisors should be obtained in developing forms and procedures for your business. The recommendations in this bulletin are designed to reduce the risk of loss, but should not be construed as eliminating any risk or loss.