

Risk management guidelines and important insights

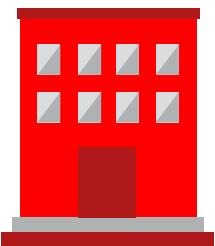
While we're here to pay to claims if the worst happens, we're all about trying to keep you and your property safe and secure in the first place.

The woodworking process, whether it's for making bespoke pieces of furniture or large commercial projects, always has some fire dangers. The most obvious is that wood burns, especially as the woodworking process creates offcuts, shavings and sawdust which ignite more easily.

Once a fire starts in these, they can produce sufficient heat to ignite any larger pieces of wood, resulting in a destructive fire. There are a few easy precautions that can be taken to help minimise the risks and be better prepared should a fire break out.



Building envelope



Should be in good condition and not afford easy access to the interior of the building.

Best practice

- Roller doors – secure these after hours, pins and padlocks, for motorised doors lock the electric open/close switch, for manual doors lock the chain to the building or door frame.

Must haves

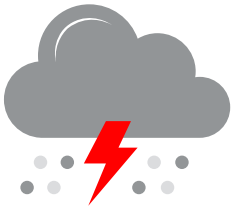
- ✓ Doors, windows and their locks, latches and hinges should be in good working order and secure the door or window tightly to the building.
- ✓ Don't make holes in fire walls and ensure that any fire doors close freely. Keep areas around fire doors clear of obstruction.



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Weather watch outs



While you can't control wild weather, you can reduce the risks that come with it.

Best practice

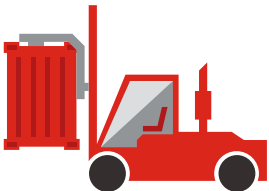
- Be aware of what weather or flood events are likely to affect your building or business. This can help you plan what needs to be done.
- Keep trees and shrubbery well-trimmed, and remove diseased or damaged limbs. Ask a professional arborist to assess and strategically remove branches to allow wind to blow through the trees.
- Protect water and other pipes from freezing using insulation, or install heat tape.

- Remove snow and hail from gutters as soon as it's safe to do so. This will reduce the possibility of subsequent rain overflowing gutters.

Must haves

- ✓ Ensure the building is well maintained, that walls and roof are watertight. Make sure doors and windows are close fitting.
- ✓ Make sure gutters and down pipes are not blocked by leaves or rubbish. Check before the winter season, or more frequently if needed.
- ✓ Inspect channel drains, yard storm water outlets and sumps and make sure they are all free-flowing and that curb side gutters are not blocked by leaves and rubbish.

Vehicle movements



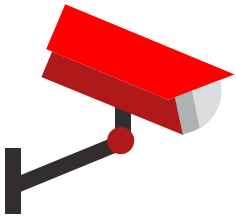
Best practice

- Make sure that the movement of trucks, forklifts and staff vehicles on the site is controlled to prevent collisions.

Must haves

- ✓ Protect parts of the building which are prone to impact damage e.g. loading docks, parking areas, building corners and narrow driveways with sturdy bollards. Canopies and overhangs are also vulnerable, display maximum height signage to assist drivers and protect these where possible e.g. direct traffic away from the canopy/overhang.

Security



Best practice

- The yard should have a high fence and gate. Gate to be locked at night using a close shackle padlock or a protective sheath over the lock – prevents lock from being cut. Don't leave padlock unlocked on the gate during the day, someone may swap this for their own lock for which they have a key.
- The yard should be well lit especially where the building is in an isolated location.

Must haves

- ✓ Monitored intruder alarm with sensors throughout not just at entry points. Sensors should not be blocked by stored goods.
- ✓ CCTV both internally and externally – ideally motion sensing and infrared to ensure images recorded in low light are clear.

Detecting fire



Fires start small, and the earlier they are detected the better the outcome can be. A monitored fire alarm with smoke and/or heat detectors can help. Heat detectors should be installed in dusty environments to avoid false alarms. A fire alarm specialist or your Risk Management Specialist can help.

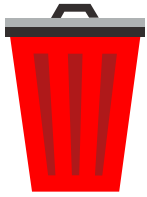
Best practice

- Large woodworking factories should ideally be sprinkler protected, this offers the best protection.
- In sprinkler protected buildings occupants should understand maximum allowable stacking heights, the need for neat and tidy stacking etc. as these factors will all affect how effectively a sprinkler system controls/ extinguishers a fire.
- The next best thing to a sprinkler system is a fire detection system, monitored by the fire brigade or a security monitoring service. Heat detection is best in areas where saw dust is significant.

Must haves

- ✓ Have sufficient number of fire extinguishers ready for use and ensure they're well signposted for emergencies. Install hose reels if you can.
- ✓ Water type fire extinguishers are effective for wood fires but remember they cannot be used on electrical equipment. So, have a mixture of adequately sized water and dry powder type fire extinguishers.
- ✓ Ensure your equipment is maintained to NZS 4503 "Hand Operated Fire-fighting Equipment".

Housekeeping



Best practice

- For machines that have built-in dust extraction systems, don't allow the bags to become over filled. Dispose of the contents as above.
- Keep storage areas neat and tidy. Timber should be neatly stacked and away from possible ignition sources such as electrical switchboards.

Must haves

- ✓ Keep the woodwork shop clean and tidy. Sweep floors regularly and remove sawdust and off cuts from in and around machinery, electric light fittings and switchboards.
- ✓ Ensure sawdust/offcuts is removed from woodworking machinery including the area surrounding the wood working machinery, and also hard to reach areas underneath and behind machines.

- ✓ Sawdust and offcuts should be disposed of in a skip or wheelie bin. If inside, this should be stored well away from ignition sources such as electrical switchboards. If outside, these skip/bins should be kept a minimum of 10m away from the building to deter arson.
- ✓ Follow manufacturers guidelines when storing hazardous substances. If you have larger quantities, you may need to comply with the Hazardous Substances Regulations. For smaller quantities a dangerous goods cabinet or dangerous goods store might be sufficient.

Electrical



Electrical switchboards are potent ignition sources, ensuring these are fault free is important.

Best practice

- Consider doing Periodic Verification of the electrical system for older buildings.
- All portable electrical equipment should be tested and tagged. Use of extension leads and power boards should be kept to a minimum. Damaged leads and boards should not be used.

Must haves

- ✓ Regular checks by an electrician is important. Thermographic imaging is a good preventative maintenance tool and can assist in detecting elevated temperatures which predict potential failure or overloading.
- ✓ Enclose electrical switch and fuse boards with a cover or cabinet. This prevents dust from collecting and potentially igniting.

Maintenance



Best practice

- Institute a programmed maintenance regime for woodworking plant and equipment.

Must haves

- ✓ There should be a regular maintenance programme for the building, building systems, fire protection and security equipment.

Watching out for water damage



With routine checks and a proper plan, the risks can be seriously reduced.

Best practice

- Plumb washing machine and dishwasher outlets into the wastewater pipe, not simply with the waste pipe hooked over a sink.

Must haves

- ✓ Know where the water shut off valve(s) are for the water supply. Where possible, shut off the water supply during extended shutdowns or when not needed e.g. over the summer holidays or in an unoccupied building.
- ✓ Ensure flexi-hoses are checked regularly and replaced if showing signs of damage – or every 10 years otherwise.

- ✓ Check shower enclosures for signs of deterioration, especially to the wall boards/tiling.
- ✓ Inspect plumbing, water pipes and waste lines for leaks, damage or corrosion. Check that all basins, tanks, etc have overflow facilities. Process tanks should be banded.
- ✓ Check and clean the roof regularly. This is important before the winter season and after storms. Pay attention to membrane-style roof coverings as these have a limited life and can be affected by environmental exposures.
- ✓ Check flashings where the walls and roof meet, and also pipes and skylights where they penetrate the roof covering.

Management controls



Must haves

- ✓ Management should have controls in place to manage activities that could result in a fire or loss or help mitigate fire or loss. These include:
 - A robust self-inspection routine.
 - Good housekeeping practices.
 - Hot work controls where cutting, welding or grinding is likely.

- Ensuring that proper procedures are in place if fire systems like the sprinkler system is out of commission for more than a few hours.
- That smoking on site is controlled and limited to a designated smoking area with suitable receptacles for disposal of smoking materials.

Business interruption



Best practice

- Important paper records should be kept in a fireproof box/cabinet.

Must haves

- ✓ Ensure all critical data is backed up at least weekly and stored off site – this can include secure Cloud services.

- ✓ As a minimum, antivirus protection installed on your computer and update regularly.

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