



Vapors from flammable and combustible liquids can ignite, causing a fire. Some examples of these liquids include:

- gasoline and diesel fuel
- alcohol
- oil-based paints and stains
- kerosene
- cleaning agents
- Solvents, paint-thinners, turpentine

Oily rags can release heat as they dry and if the heat is not released into the air, it builds up – this is why a pile of oily rags can be dangerous. As the rags dry, the heat gets trapped, builds up, and can cause a fire.

When flammable and combustible liquids are used and when rags become soiled with these liquids there must be special care taken to prevent a fire hazard.

- Never leave oily rags in a pile.
- Do not use flammable or combustible liquids near a heat source or open flame.
- After use, place oily rags in a covered, fire-resistant container that is labeled.
- The contents of the oily rag containers should be disposed of regularly and safely to prevent the accumulation of materials that could pose a fire hazard.
- Ensure there is good ventilation in areas where flammable and combustible liquids are handled, and oily rags are used.
- There should be no smoking in areas where oily rags are used or stored.
- Do not store flammable liquids near exits, stairways, or walkways.

OSHA Standard 1910.106(e)(9)(iii) *Combustible waste material and residues in a building or unit operating area shall be kept to a minimum, stored in covered metal receptacles and disposed of daily.*

Discussion

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Why is ventilation important in areas where oily rags are used and stored?

Why is it important to store oily rags in specific, approved containers?