



# CHEMICAL CONTROLS

## FLAMMABLE SUBSTANCES

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

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### INTRODUCTION

Flammable substances are commonly used in the industrial laundry environment and come in various forms such as aerosols, liquids and solids. Some examples of flammable substances, although not an exhaustive list, are:

1. Various substances used by the engineering / technical function
2. Glues (solid and aerosol)
3. Poly-mark solvent
4. Other solvents
5. Petrol and diesel
6. Paints, thinners and white spirit

Note – flammable gases have been purposely left out of this list, as these gases have been subject to a separate “Good Practice Guidance”.

Flammable substances will be identified with the following label:



### KEY CONTROLS

There are three main requirements in relation to the use of flammable substances:

1. The requirements of the ‘Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002’
2. The requirements of the ‘Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002’

3. From a fire perspective, flammable substances need to be managed and controlled at all times.

The following are some key controls which should be considered and adopted where appropriate:

1. All flammable substances should be stored in a purpose-built flame-resistant cupboard, which should include:
  - a. The flammable substances should be located in a safe and low risk area.
  - b. The flammable substances and bulk storage areas should be located in a ventilated area to prevent any build-up of fumes.
  - c. The flame-proof cupboards are normally painted in yellow colour, to allow easy identification in an emergency.
  - d. The flammable substances must have adequate security, ensuring authorised access.
  - e. The flammable substances should be clearly signed.
  - f. "Product Safety Data Sheets" for flammable substances should be kept to date and in the immediate vicinity of the storage.
  - g. Performance requirements for fire resisting cupboards and bins:  
(Ref: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/fireandexplosion/storageflammliquids.htm>)
    - i. the materials used to form the sides, top, bottom, door(s) and lid should be capable of providing the required fire resistance (i.e. 30 minutes integrity) and reaction to fire (i.e. minimal risk)
    - ii. the joints between the sides, top and bottom of cupboards and bins should be free from openings or gaps
    - iii. the lid / doors should be close fitting against the frame of the bin/cupboard, such that there is a nominal overlap between the frame and lid/doors in their closed position

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- iv. that the supports and fastenings should be of a material with a melting point greater than 750°C
2. Flammable substances should be separated to avoid accidental mixing with any other substance.
3. Limit the quantity of flammable substances held on site, to a minimum.
4. Limit the working quantity at any one time and return the product to the flame-proof cupboard when the work activity is completed.
5. Any fossil fuel should be held in a purposely designed container.
6. Any decanting activity should include an appropriate risk assessment and safe system of work. This includes appropriate selection, labelling and securing of containers.
7. Appropriate spill control procedure and equipment should be made available and only used by competent employees.  
*Note: this will include the disposal of the spillage waste generated by the spillage procedure.*
8. No uncontrolled flammable substances should be in the vicinity of any hot work activity or ignition sources.
9. No containers of flammable substances should be stored in hot environments or in direct sun light, for example boiler house or next to steam pipes.
10. No empty containers which have previously contained a flammable substance should be subject to any cutting activity, unless an appropriate purging process has been fully completed.
11. The exact location of the flammable substances should be clearly identified on the site map, diagram or fire plan.

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